

LET US LOVE IN DEED AND TRUTH:
THE LIFE AND WORK OF LARRY PEYTON KING (1932-1990)

by

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Submitted to the faculty of the
Jacobs School of Music in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree,
Doctor of Music
Indiana University
December 2017

Accepted by the faculty of the
Indiana University Jacobs School of Music,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Music

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December 5, 2017

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In memoriam Walter and Eleanor Mueller.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all of my organ teachers who inspired and encouraged me throughout my study of organ: Julie Ryder, Carol Feather Martin, Celia Amstutz, William Neil, Donald Sutherland, Larry Smith, and Christopher Young.

For the support and wisdom of my doctoral committee: Janette Fishell, Christopher Young, Marilyn Keiser, and Marianne Kielian-Gilbert.

For the abundant assistance of Gwynedd Cannan and Anne Petrimoulx in accessing the archives at Trinity Church Wall Street.

Special thanks to Jane Ishibashi at the Fullerton College Library, Cheri Pape, the Local History Archivist at the Fullerton Public Library, and Debora Richey and Jonathan Cornforth at the California State University Fullerton Library for their extraordinary help gathering information regarding King's family and California roots.

My gratitude extends to all musicians who gave of their time to be interviewed, as acknowledged in the Bibliography, in particular Cherry Rhodes and Ladd Thomas for their openness and hospitality while I visited them in Pasadena, California.

Lastly, but most importantly, thanks are due to my family: my parents and sister for their support – not just during the ten years I devoted to this degree, but during the nearly thirty years prior – and to my husband for being my graduate school “sounding board” and for his great care of our daughter while I slaved away at all hours of the day.

Preface

If Larry King is recognized at all among church musicians and organists it is most likely for one of his three published organ compositions, and perhaps also as an innovator in the world of church music in the 1970's and 1980's. While unique, these works, and his ground-breaking strides in church music, pale in comparison to the significance of his overall career. His incredible gift of pastoral ministry and his knowledge and performance of traditional church music have been lost and overshadowed by his innovation. "Let Us Love in Deed and Truth," the title of this document, is an apt summation of Larry King's short life and extensive career. The text comes from 1 John 3:17-23, the Scripture upon which King based his stunning anthem, which is dedicated to his cherished Family Choir. It my strong desire that King's great work not be lost, and it is my hope that this document and research will go a long way towards preserving his legacy.

Sources

When beginning this project I found that information on Larry King was scarce. The main sources of information in existence at the time were the tributes and re-printed eulogies from the memorial services found in the September 1990 issue of *The American Organist*, including Cherry Rhodes' lengthy tribute. Otherwise, King has seemingly been overlooked in the nearly three decades since his death.

This necessitated that I search for additional avenues, which came in the form of two primary sources: interviews that I did with King's surviving friends and colleagues, and the Trinity Church Wall Street Archives. The latter provided a wealth of information; to my great delight, King was an archivist and researcher's dream, keeping and filing

much of what came across his desk throughout his twenty-one year tenure at Trinity. I spent three weeks digging in the archives, with an end result of approximately five-thousand scanned documents. His files remain in the archives generally as they were in King's possession – his folders have simply been organized alphabetically into boxes. Sorting through the enormous volume of information was a monumental task, but certainly a labor of love.

Over the course of several years I conducted a dozen interviews; I began with a list of people with whom King had an obvious connection, primarily his New York City colleagues and assistants. Inevitably, additional names were added to the list as my research continued. Despite immense effort on my part, not all were able to be interviewed due to various circumstances out of my control. Nonetheless, the information gathered from interviews I was able to undertake does provide a comprehensive glimpse into the life and work of King.

Organization of the Document

The focus of this project changed over the course of my research. In the end, King's work at Trinity Wall Street formed the bulk of the document, in part due to the wealth of information gathered from their archives, and in part because of the significance of the information that was found.

In this document, Chapter One recalls King's youth, continuing through his Junior College years, and including his early musical training. In Chapter Two, King's early career is discussed, including his church positions leading up to the start of his Trinity Wall Street post. Additionally, his Army service and his organ study at University of Redlands, in England, and in New York City are covered. Chapter Three is lengthy,

focusing on his extensive work at Trinity Wall Street, in particular that which is most representative of his use of traditional music and repertoire, including the professional Trinity Choir and the annual Ascension Day services. As King truly believed the Church to be a patron of the arts and keeper of the artists, King's creative and contemporary ventures are an extremely significant aspect to his own work and specific work at Trinity; this work is explored later in the chapter. Included are various innovative concerts and information on the many premieres and commissions which King encouraged and oversaw.

In light of the significant work King did with the Family Choir at Trinity, Chapter Four focuses exclusively on this Choir. It includes their Reach Out and Touch Ministry and the annual Feast of Lights, for which the Family Choir served as backbone.

While not a major focus of the document, King's three published organ works are addressed in Chapter Five, with pertinent details and history of the compositions. One unpublished work, *Aquarius II*, is mentioned in brief.

Chapter Six explains King's seventeen year illness and eventual death, and the Epilogue, Chapter Seven, reflects on King's incredible legacy. Both chapters feature reflections from King's colleagues and friends.

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Chapter 1: YOUTH (1932-1952)

Larry Peyton King was born on February 16, 1932 in Whittier, California. His parents were both originally Midwesterners: his father, Leslie “Les” Peyton King, was born on October 28, 1899, in Milton, Kentucky; his mother, Dorothy Louise Hulett, was born August 1, 1904, in Missouri. Though Leslie’s family was from Kentucky, his father brought the family to South Gate, California at some point in his upbringing; Larry spent his early years in South Gate as well.¹ Leslie was a laborer, a truck driver with Post Transportation Co. in Los Angeles.² His mother was a well-educated college graduate and an admired elementary school teacher, and would serve for many years at Fullerton Interfaith Emergency Service’s Food Distribution Center.³ Given the contrast in Leslie and Dorothy’s backgrounds, Elden Buck, a childhood friend of King’s, recalls that Larry always said it was a puzzle to him how his parents met.⁴ The family grew with the arrival of a brother, Robert, in 1935.

In 1940, the family moved to a small home built in 1926 on 333 W. Malvern Avenue in Fullerton.⁵ The quaint tree-lined street in the blue collar town within Orange County would be home to Larry’s parents for the remainder of his entire life. Indeed, the tight-knit family spent much time in Fullerton: Dorothy, a third-grade teacher, taught a

¹ Cherry Rhodes, Eulogy for Larry King, Rhodes’ personal files.

² “Former Fullerton Man to Give Recital,” *Fullerton News Tribune*, 3 August 1963 and “Man Restores ‘Ancient’ Clock,” *Fullerton News Tribune*, 3 December 1971.

³ Dorothy King obituary, *Fullerton Observer*, early September 1995.

⁴ Elden Buck, interview by author, 25 February 2017, via e-mail.

⁵ “Former Fullerton Man to Give Recital,” *Fullerton News Tribune*, 3 August 1963.

mile and a half away from their Malvern home at Raymond Elementary School, and Larry's elementary school, high school, and junior college would all be within a mile of their home. This Malvern Avenue home is still in the family: Larry's brother Robert lives on the property to this day.

Indications that King was a budding musician and composer appeared early. His mother Dorothy recalled that when she brought Larry to church as a "babe in arms" he would quietly look all around with curiosity and interest, observing every detail of the church, and that he especially loved to hear the organ.⁶ At one and a half years old, Dorothy related that King would stand in front of the radio and listen to music.⁷

By the time he was six, he wanted a piano and we got him a play one. He wanted a big one, though, and Santa Claus brought it for him when he was seven years old. He thought he could sit right down and play it, but soon found out differently.⁸

While King was an eight year old student at Ford Elementary School his formal piano lessons began with Mrs. Y. W. Ramsey, a private piano teacher in Fullerton.⁹ From this early age, King became easily frustrated when his fingers could not keep up with the music he heard in his mind.¹⁰

King was introduced to the organ while in high school by Fullerton College Music Department Chairman Nelson Bonar. King inquired about taking organ lessons

⁶ Cherry Rhodes, Eulogy for Larry King's memorial service, Rhodes' personal files.

⁷ Dorothy King, interview in "Former Fullerton Man to Give Recital," *Fullerton News Tribune*, 3 August, 1963.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Cherry Rhodes, Eulogy to Larry King, *The American Organist*, September 1990, Vol. 24, No. 9, 75.

from a teacher, presumably Bonar.¹¹ The instructor's schedule was full, as apparently twins had just registered for lessons,¹² however, after King's piano teacher spoke to the organ teacher the twins "...suddenly disappeared from the instructor's schedule," making room for King.¹³ To quote Cherry Rhodes as she reflected on this years later at King's memorial service, "...are we ever grateful!"¹⁴ Thus, King's organ lessons began as a sophomore at Fullerton Union High School. King was able to put his skills to work right away, as his high school auditorium had a four-manual Wurlitzer, Opus 2103, installed in 1929. Unsurprisingly, King became the official organist of the high school, playing for ceremonies and commencements.¹⁵ The same year that King began organ lessons, 1946, King met someone who would become a life-long friend, Elden Buck, when Buck's father became minister of First Christian Church/Disciples of Christ in Fullerton, where King's family were members. King and Buck became close friends as they were the same age and both attended Fullerton Union High School. Buck recalls King's role as organist at the school:

Throughout high school, Larry was fast becoming an accomplished organist. Neither one of us was into sports, but while I gravitated toward the drama department, Larry played the organ for all important school events. We students at Fullerton Union High school were very fortunate. The campus boasted a beautiful Spanish colonial style auditorium with a state-of-the-art stage, and a four manual pipe organ. I remember Larry – so small he nearly disappeared into the embrace of the giant console – playing Mendelssohn's "War March of the Priests" as the

¹¹ "Former Fullerton Man to Give Recital," *Fullerton News Tribune*, 3 August, 1963.

¹² Cherry Rhodes, Eulogy to Larry King, personal files.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Elden Buck, interview by author, 25 February 2017, via e-mail.

prom king and queen, and their court, marched down the aisle. Everyone loved it when Larry pulled out all the stops!¹⁶

At some point in high school, King began lessons with Dr. Clarence Mader; Buck recalls attending some of King's lessons at First Presbyterian in Los Angeles. Little is known of this period of organ study in King's life, but it is certain that Mader, a student of Lynnwood Farnam and advocate of contemporary music, had a great impact on King's interest in contemporary American organ music.¹⁷

King continued piano lessons with Mrs. Ramsey through high school. Buck also studied piano with her, and he remembers King's and his joint effort at the keyboard:

Though I was never in Larry's league as a pianist, I remember how thrilled I was to play Ernesto Lecuana's "Malaguena" on two pianos with Larry, as the climax of one of Mrs. Ramsey's student recitals.¹⁸

King and Buck also shared other, less successful, music lessons:

Taking clarinet lessons together was also a big mistake. The squeaks and squawks would set off our funny bones to such an extent that no serious learning took place!¹⁹

While King was a serious student of music and the organ during his high school years, he also spent time with friends, enjoying musical and non-musical adventures together. Buck reflected on some of the fun the two of them shared during high school. On one occasion, King and Buck attended a performance of Bach's *Mass in B Minor*

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ "Former Fullerton Man to Give Recital."

¹⁸ Elden Buck.

¹⁹ Ibid.

together at First Congregational Church in Los Angeles, and they also frequently enjoyed attending radio shows:

Larry's maternal grandmother, Mrs. Hulett, worked as housekeeper for Meredith Wilson²⁰ and his wife in their Beverly Hills home. She was instrumental in getting tickets for Larry and me to attend live broadcasts of the Burns and Allen radio show on which Meredith Wilson was a cast member and directed the orchestra.

We enjoyed these shows immensely, and went often, sometimes taking my twin sister and one of her girlfriends, with us. Larry's father drove us to these shows until we got our own drivers licenses. Looking back, I'm amazed at how lenient our parents were in allowing us to drive the thirty miles into Hollywood on our own!

Not only did we enjoy the Burns & Allen show, but other radio shows as well. I remember how excited we both were the night we watched Ingrid Bergman read the part of Jane Eyre in the Lux Radio Theatre rendition of that novel.²¹

The two were still kids, however, and shared in mischief as well. As Buck relates,

Larry and I were probably juniors when, one day after school, we crawled through the trap door into the organ loft at church while a woman was at the console in the empty sanctuary. She was practicing for lessons she was taking from the regular church organist – and, alas, we just didn't like her! We were kids, and what we did was very much a spur of the moment thing. As she played, we quietly pulled several of the smaller pipes from their air holes, put them to our mouths and tooted them. She stopped to listen – and we stopped. She began playing again, and we tooted again... Until she ran, crying, to the church office to report that she'd broken the organ, and Larry and I hightailed it out of there.²²

In 1949 King graduated from Fullerton Union High School.²³ Buck shared how the two of them celebrated this milestone:

²⁰ Meredith Wilson (1902-1984) was an American composer and playwright who wrote the music for the hit musical *The Music Man*. Although the Broadway premiere of *The Music Man* was not until 1957, well after King's attendance of the Burns and Allen radio shows, this no doubt provided inspiration for King.

²¹ Elden Buck.

²² Elden Buck.

²³ *Los Angeles Times*, September 22, 1957, 18. Interestingly, given King's later interest in and use of the electric guitar in his work and music, the same year that Larry graduated from high school, another

As we were finishing high school, Larry and I decided to celebrate our graduation with a trip to San Francisco. We saved our money and made reservations at the Mark Hopkins Hotel on Nob Hill. We took the train up the California coast. We rode the cable cars, ate at Fishermen's Wharf, and attended services in Grace Cathedral. We also laughed a lot! It's strange now, remembering how funny everything seemed to be when the two of us were together. At the end of the week we flew back to Los Angeles – the first plane ride for both of us.²⁴

Later in 1949 King began attending Fullerton Junior College.²⁵ There King served as organist and accompanist for the A'Capella Choir before graduating in 1951. Elden Buck, who also attended Fullerton Junior College, recalls their failed attempts at college athletic endeavors:

We were never enthusiastic about sports, and high school PE classes were always an embarrassing drag for both of us. When we got to Junior College we discovered that golf was being offered as an elective. "Maybe that's our thing!" We signed up – but didn't last a semester.²⁶

King, along with Buck, graduated from Fullerton Junior College in 1952.²⁷

Fullerton resident and former Fullerton High School graduate, Leo Fender, designed the first mass-produced solid-body electric guitar, the Fender Telecaster. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leo_Fender, accessed November 2016.

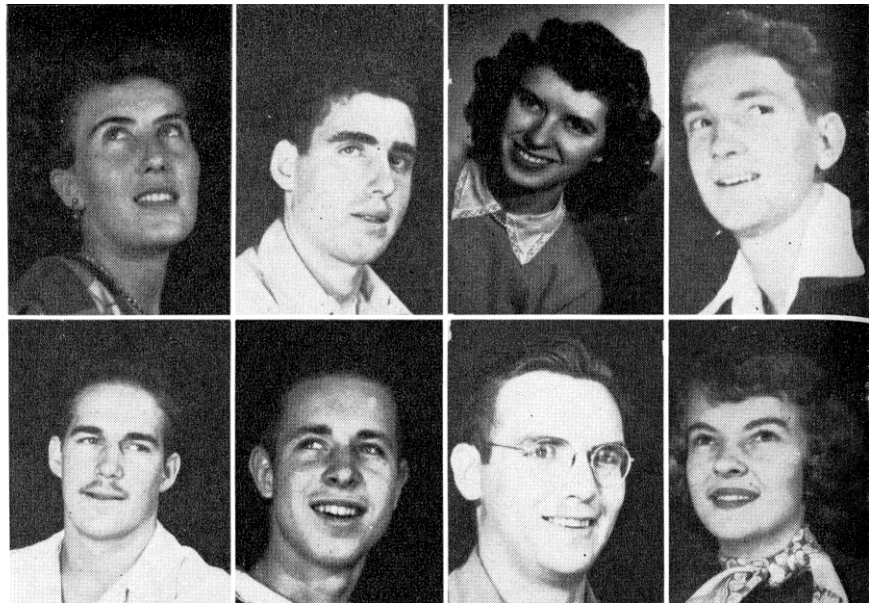
²⁴ Elden Buck.

²⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, September 22, 1957, p.18.

²⁶ Elden Buck.

²⁷ Due to privacy laws, King's degree and exact graduation date are not available.

Ethern Killen
 Bill King
 Kathy King
 Larry King



Douglas Kirkmeyer
 George Kroeger
 Ronald Krause
 Brigitta Kliss

FIGURE 1.1 Larry King's 1950 Fullerton College Torch Yearbook photo.
Source: Fullerton Junior College Archives.



FIGURE 1.2 The 1951 Fullerton College A'Capella Choir.
 King is in the second row, second from the left.
Source: 1951 Fullerton College Torch Yearbook.

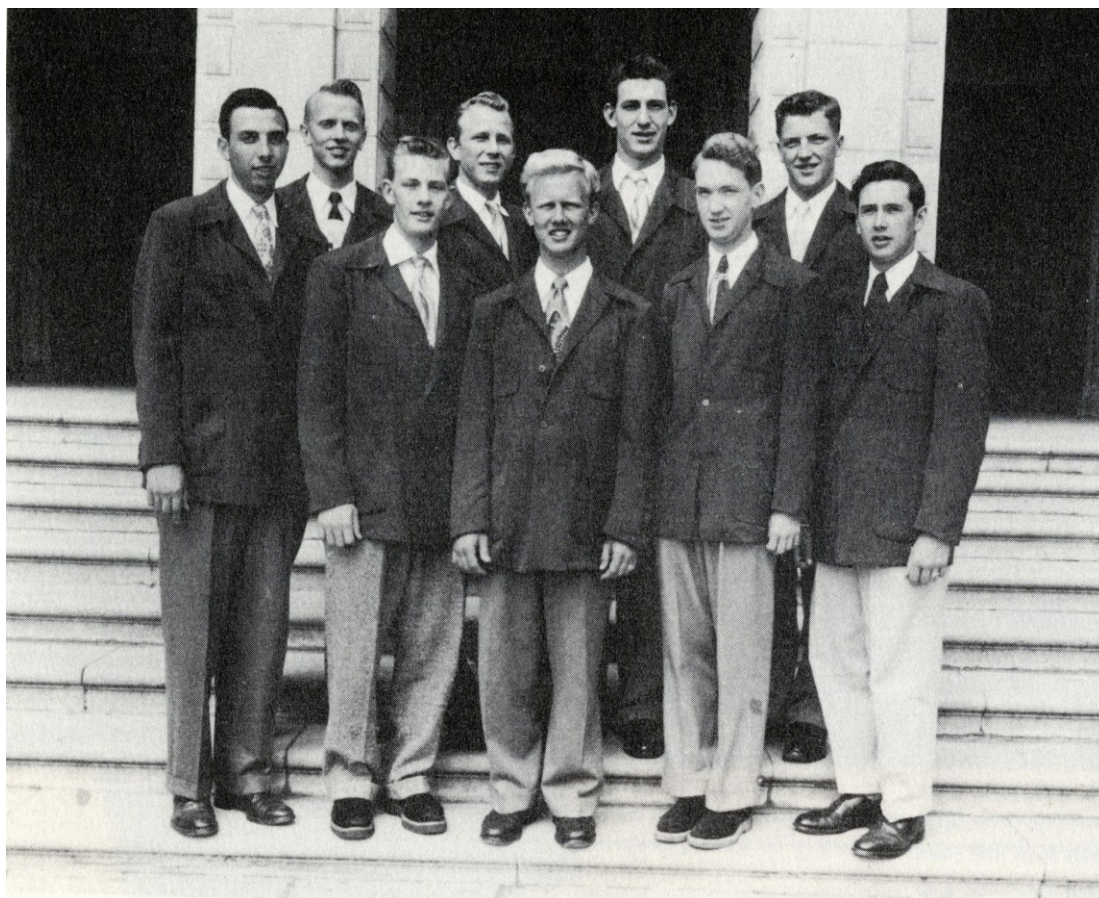


FIGURE 1.3 The A'Capella Choir at Fullerton College. Larry King, the accompanist, is in the front row, second from the right.
Source: 1951 Fullerton College Torch Yearbook.

Chapter 2: EARLY CAREER (1952-1968)

By age sixteen, King was serving as church organist. His initial position was at First Presbyterian Church in Fullerton which he began in 1947 or 1948 and continued until 1950.²⁸ King also directed the children's choir, which he named the Cecilian Choir, and showed initiative by taking it to the Pacific Palisades Choir Camp. Church records indicate he also "...arranged for the first Choir Evensong," and, although details on this service are unclear, it becomes apparent that by this time in his life King had exposure to and interest in the liturgical Anglican service.²⁹ This is interesting to note given what would be King's eventual thirty-year career in the Episcopal Church, and his dedication to involving children in music programs in every position he would eventually hold.

King continued in his position at First Presbyterian Church during his first year as a college student. The following year, in 1950, he became organist for First Methodist Church in Fullerton.³⁰ For his first year at the Methodist Church, King must have served as part-time organist, as the Church Board minutes indicate that in October 1951 the music committee hired King as "full-time organist," and the church agreed to an additional \$300 from church funds towards a salary of \$100 a month.³¹ King served alongside the music director, Ralph W. Lee, for two years, after which they moved on together to First United Methodist Church in Riverside in September 1952. One can assume their collaboration was a fruitful one, and their work was well-received by the

²⁸ "Former Fullerton Man to Give Recital" *Fullerton News Tribune*, September 5, 1957 and "History of the Choirs," First Presbyterian Church Archives, Fullerton, California.

²⁹ "History of the Choirs," First Presbyterian Church, Fullerton, California Archives.

³⁰ "Former Fullerton Man to Give Recital."

³¹ Minutes of Fullerton First United Methodist Church Official Board, Church Archives, October 3, 1951.

congregation and staff. Upon leaving their first church in Fullerton, the bulletin stated:

“We have all gained much from the music that they led, for they chose carefully, practiced thoroughly, and performed professionally in all presentations.”³²

King remained at First United Methodist in Riverside for exactly five years. In the middle of his time there, in September 1953, King joined the U.S. Army. Several friends and colleagues have corroborated that King did not enjoy his time in the Army and it was not something he would have signed up for voluntarily. King’s friend, Elden Buck, shared a bit of King’s experience:

After graduating from Fullerton Junior College in 1952, our lives went in different directions. The Korean War was raging, and as I was enrolled in Bible college, then seminary, I was given a deferral. Larry, however, was drafted into the U.S. Army. He was miserable, until an insightful chaplain arranged for Larry to be his assistant and chapel organist.³³

King served at least part of his time at Fort Ord, California, and may have remained there for the entire duration of his service.³⁴ He served for precisely two years, from September 21, 1953 through September 22, 1955 when he was discharged with the rank of sergeant.³⁵

During his two years in the Army, King appears to have maintained his position at First Methodist in Riverside, or at least the church “held” the position for him, and thus when he completed his military service on September 1955, he returned to the church for two more years of work. Regardless, King’s relationship with the Methodist congregation

³² First United Methodist Church Riverside Bulletin, Church Archives, September 7, 1952.

³³ Elden Buck.

³⁴ First United Methodist Church Riverside Newsletter, Church Archives, October 11, 1953.

³⁵ U.S. Department of VA Affairs Death File, www.ancestry.com.

was such that he sought support from them during his time at Fort Ord: the following note appeared in the church newsletter in the fall of 1953: “We have heard from Larry: ‘I’m really hungry for mail.’”³⁶

Following his time in the Army, and while continuing his position at First Methodist in Riverside, King, now twenty-three years old, returned to school. He entered University of Redlands, California, studying with Dr. Leslie Pratt Spelman. While little is known about this time in King’s organ study, Gregory Eaton, a future assistant organist of King’s at Trinity Church Wall Street and a fellow student of Spelman, states that Spelman’s influence on King cannot be overestimated.³⁷ Eaton speaks of Spelman as an excellent pedagogue, reflecting how he was always on top of what was new, never ceasing to learn himself.³⁸ This is likely how King came by his championship of American organ music; Eaton relates that Spelman’s greatest concern was new American music, both organ and choral, recalling that Spelman would say “Remember French organists play French organ music; Germans play German organ music. I don’t know why Americans are allergic to their own music!”³⁹ King most certainly held Spelman in the highest esteem possible, and his influence on King would be seen throughout his entire career by way of interest in and support of contemporary American composers and

³⁶ First United Methodist Church, Riverside Newsletter, Church Archives, October 11, 1953.

³⁷ Gregory Eaton, interview by author, 12 January 2016, via telephone.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

their music.⁴⁰ King received the Bachelor of Arts Music degree in organ from Redlands in 1957, at age twenty-five.⁴¹

A few months after graduation from Redlands, King played his final morning service at First Methodist Church, Riverside on Sunday, September 1, 1957.⁴² That afternoon, King flew from Los Angeles to New York City, and the following morning he boarded the S. S. United States, headed to England, having been awarded a Fulbright to study for a year at the Royal Academy of Music in London.⁴³ While in London, King studied with C. H. Trevor, organ professor at the Royal Academy of Music. While little is known of King's study with Trevor and his time in London, there is no doubt that King learned a great deal from the English church music tradition while there, and it certainly remained with him throughout his career. Perhaps most notable of what we know from King's time in London is that King struck up a friendship with Sir William McKie, Organist and Master of the Choristers at Westminster Abbey, and this led to King performing at the Abbey while in London.⁴⁴ In 1958, King received a licentiate diploma in organ performance from the Royal School of Music.

Upon returning to the United States following his Fulbright study, King settled in New York City, and began work on a Master of Sacred Music degree at Union Theological Seminary. King originally planned to enter Union the previous year, 1957, having applied to Union while finishing his degree at Redlands. However, in the

⁴⁰ Gregory Eaton.

⁴¹ "Former Fullerton Man to Give Recital," *Fullerton News Tribune*, September 5, 1957 .

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

meantime, King had been offered the Fulbright so he deferred enrollment to Union for one year. King's enrollment in Union would forge what would be a life-long friendship with Alec Wyton, Organist and Master of the Choristers at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in New York City. Decades later, after King's death, Wyton would recall their first meeting:

On a bright Spring day in 1957, a crew-cut Californian came to see me at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine to ask if he could be my organ student when he entered the Masters program of Union Seminary's School of [Sacred] Music. I asked him to play for me and we talked and I was so impressed that I invited him to be my student and my assistant at the Cathedral beginning in the Fall.⁴⁵

While beginning his studies with Wyton at Union in the Fall of 1958, apparently plans for King to work with Wyton at St. John the Divine that first year did not materialize.

Instead, Wyton recommended King to Reginald G. Stewart, Rector of Saint Mary the Virgin in Chappaqua, New York.⁴⁶ So, in April 1958, while King was still in London, he was hired by Saint Mary's to serve as organist and choir director once he returned to the States that fall.⁴⁷ At Saint Mary's, King directed an adult volunteer choir, and possibly a junior choir as well.⁴⁸ His appointment was for the period of September 1958 through June 1959, with a stipend of \$150.00 per month.⁴⁹ However, King's appointment was later extended through July 1959, at which time his tenure at Saint Mary's ended.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Alec Wyton, "Tribute to Larry King," Cherry Rhodes' personal archives.

⁴⁶ Vestry minutes, Saint Mary the Virgin, Chappaqua, New York, via Ken White, parish historian.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

In August 1959, as he was beginning his second year at Union, King began his position at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, serving as Alec Wyton's assistant. In addition to his organ studies with Wyton, King studied choral conducting with Elaine Brown and Margaret Hillis while at Union.⁵¹ According to John Walker, Brown's "pastoral passion" was similar to King's, and likely encouraged and inspired King in his own work as a musician.⁵² King graduated cum laude from Union Theological Seminary in 1960 with his Master of Sacred Music degree.

King's connection to England would continue long after his Fulbright study in London. In the summer of 1960, King moved back to England to serve as Sir William McKie's summer assistant at Westminster Abbey, at McKie's request. King's friendship with McKie, forged during his study in London, led to this, his second invitation to play at the Abbey.⁵³ This highly unusual invitation for an American to serve at the Abbey was perhaps in part due to the fact that McKie himself was not English, but an Australian, who having received a scholarship to study at the Royal College of Music in London at age eighteen, would remain in England until his retirement from the Abbey. In fact, in August 1963, McKie put forth a third invitation to King, this time requesting that King play one more recital before his retirement from the Abbey.⁵⁴ In between jobs in the United States, King returned to London, England, this time with his mother, Dorothy. It was long a dream of King's mother that he would play a recital at the Abbey, and so for

⁵¹ John Walker, interview by author, December 16, 2016.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ A third invitation to play at Westminster Abbey came from Sir William would come three years later, in the summer of 1963.

⁵⁴ "Former Fullerton Man to Give Recital," *Fullerton News Tribune*, September 5, 1957.

the first time in her life she traveled outside of the United States, from Fullerton, California to London to hear King play. Following the recital, the mother and son spent two weeks traveling: “My son is going to show me England.”⁵⁵

Following his summer at the Abbey in 1960, King returned to New York City and continued working with Wyton at St. John the Divine for one more year. King’s time at the Cathedral was fruitful and a great learning experience – King obviously benefitted from the relationship with Wyton as he continued to absorb the Episcopal church music tradition under his tutelage. Moreover, King’s New York City colleague John Walker asserts that King learned many of his pastoral philosophies from Wyton.⁵⁶

Following his student days in New York, Larry King was appointed Organist-Choirmaster at St. Clement’s Church in St. Paul, Minnesota. He served there from September 1961-July 1963. In the St. Clement’s Chimes newsletter, summer 1963, this announcement from the Rector appeared:

At a special meeting of the Vestry on Monday, May 27, I had the extreme displeasure of reading Mr. Larry King’s resignation as organist and choirmaster to accept a similar position at St. Paul’s Church, San Diego beginning September first. St. Paul’s is one of the largest parishes in the Diocese of Los Angeles and we can easily understand their desire to have the kind of musical direction Mr. King can give. However, we deeply regret his leaving us. He has done a superb job of rebuilding and enhancing our choral tradition during the past two years and has become a delightful professional colleague and warm friend. We shall miss him greatly and hasten to express our gratitude for his creative leadership.⁵⁷

After returning to the United States from England, King moved back to his beloved California, where on September 1, 1963, King became Organist-Choirmaster at

⁵⁵ Dorothy King, “Former Fullerton Man to Give Recital,” *Fullerton News Tribune*, September 5, 1957.

⁵⁶ John Walker.

⁵⁷ St. Clement’s Chimes newsletter, Summer 1963, St. Clement’s Episcopal Church Archives.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, San Diego.⁵⁸ Here King would remain for five years, building three choirs totaling one-hundred twenty-two voices.⁵⁹ When King started his tenure at St. Paul's, there was a mixed-voice choir that had replaced the choir of men and boys, founded in 1885, but which had become unsustainable. King re-started the choir of men and boys, and it has flourished since then, remaining one of the few boy choirs in the United States. It is unknown whether this replaced or lived alongside a mixed voice choir at St. Paul's, but regardless, King's exposure to men and boys choirs in both London and New York City indicate an obvious influence upon his decision in San Diego.

While serving at St. Paul's, King made a fourth trip to England in July and August of 1967: King accompanied the Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys of St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral in Los Angeles on their three-week tour to England, serving as their organist.⁶⁰ While on tour, King worked alongside St. Paul's Cathedral's Organist-Choirmaster at the time, Frank K. Owen.⁶¹

King cherished his years at St. Paul's in San Diego; he developed lifelong friendships while working there, and many years later, when he would return to Southern California for the final months of his life, his San Diego friends would provide King with much love, support and assistance.⁶²

⁵⁸ St. Paul's became a Cathedral in 1985.

⁵⁹ Family Choir Brochure, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, Folder 850, 497.

⁶⁰ "Local Organist Joins For Tour of Britain," *Fullerton News Tribune*, 24 June 1967.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Cherry Rhodes, "Eulogy for Larry King," Rhodes' personal files.

Chapter 3: TRINITY CHURCH WALL STREET (1968-1989)

In 1968, King crossed the United States again to accept a position as Organist and Music Director at Trinity Church Wall Street in New York City. King's mentor and colleague from his time at St. John the Divine, Alec Wyton, assisted Trinity in their hiring of King. Years later, Wyton recalled this process:

In 1968 the Rector of Trinity Parish in New York, Dr. John Butler, who had been my Dean at the Cathedral, asked me to come to Trinity to succeed George Mead who had retired. I told Dr. Butler that I could not bear to leave the Cathedral but that I would help him find the finest young musician in the country to head his music program. Larry was the obvious first choice and to our delight he came and began a ministry which has been a model for all of us.⁶³

It is clear that his old mentor was very proud and supportive of King, and Trinity Church would serve as King's passion and focus for the next twenty-one years. It was here that King gained recognition for his innovative approach to music and concert programming. Indeed, Trinity was a perfect fit for King as a long-standing advocate of contemporary music: it was in Trinity's first building on Wall Street that Handel's Messiah was introduced to America in 1770, and it would continue this support for "great music of our time" throughout King's tenure.

King's arrival at Trinity Wall Street came at a unique time in the life of the historic Episcopal parish. Trinity did not escape the urban church crisis of the 1960's, with attendance falling and interest in the church waning. In 1966 Trinity had hired the Rev. Dr. John Vernon Butler as Rector; he was determined to reform

⁶³ Alec Wyton, "Tribute to Larry King," Cherry Rhodes' personal files.

the way Trinity operated, leading to a document entitled “One Peppercorn.”⁶⁴ Butler and King seem to have been of one mind when it came to music and mission. As the son of an organist and a lover of great music, Butler saw incredible opportunity to revitalize the declining interest in music at Trinity: Trinity held a great facility for music making, a potential audience, and unique funds for creativity which afforded the parish an opportunity to experiment without “blackmail of pledge.”

King saw his mission similarly: to “help jolt church back into the mainstream of music by emphasizing/performing music that is of its time or ahead, and not behind.” Dr. Butler’s “liturgical leanings” were greatly influenced by Canon Edward West at Saint John the Divine, where Butler had served as Dean from 1960-66.⁶⁵ Canon West had assisted in creating the customary – the traditional local liturgical practices – for the services at Trinity; Canon West and Butler desired that the playing of fanfares at the elevations of the bread and wine at the offertory be done at Trinity as had been done at the Cathedral church.⁶⁶ Trinity’s existing Solo Division harmonic trumpet was barely up to the task, but nevertheless used for this purpose at both Sunday and weekday masses. Dr. Butler made it a priority that Trinity’s rebuilt organ provide a suitable fanfare trumpet for this reason.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Brief Outline of the History of Trinity Church in the City of New York and its Music, page 19. Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, Box 855.

⁶⁵ Brief Outline, page 7.

⁶⁶ Ibid. This had been tradition at the Cathedral since the dedication of the State Trumpet at the premiere of Leo Sowerby’s prelude on *Deus tuorum militum*.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

Traditional Music

While King is known to most present-day church musicians as an innovator, his New York City colleagues and assistants – many of whom are still practicing professional musicians across the United States to this day – recall and espouse King's great knowledge and performance of traditional church repertoire as well. King was equally at home directing the professional Trinity Choir in Allegri's *Miserere* as he was producing and performing a sound and light show which included music for prepared tape and organ. However, since King frequently and extremely skillfully intertwined both innovative ideas and contemporary music with traditional repertoire, as seen within both the context of his concerts and worship services, it is difficult to point out instances of exclusively one or the other. In this section the author will give examples of King's use of primarily traditional music, but may also include information on contemporary music that King included in the same concert or service.

Noonday Concerts

The noonday concerts are a prime example of King's creative ability to maintain the traditional, yet expand upon that without sacrificing the integrity of the tradition. One of the first changes King made to the music program at Trinity was the expansion of the noontime recital series. Victor Baier, Trinity's organist from 1897-1921, began the weekly noontime organ recitals in the early 1900's, and Dr. Channing Lefebvre increased the noontime organ recitals to two per week after his appointment in 1922.⁶⁸ When King came on board, he made a change to the series – one significant enough that it stands

⁶⁸ Brief Outline, page 5.

today as a marker in the history of music at Trinity: King expanded the concerts to include both instrumental and vocal music, in addition to the organ. By the start of King's second year at Trinity, there was great variety in music heard at Noonday Concerts. In the September 1970 Trinity newsletter, King noted:

Where else can a secretary, broker or messenger boy hear renaissance (sic) motets, Bach's organ music, contemporary music for Woodwind quintet, Brahms' Liebeslieder Waltzes with candles and flowers, electronic music intermingled with that of 14 percussion instruments, Scarlatti Sonatas on the harpsichord and the New York Rock Ensemble all on one series? This diversity has brought scores of new friends, who have found that they like other things we do also. Our regular audiences continue to increase and 222 of our music programs are sent by request each month to special supporters who post them in their offices. I am especially pleased that the average age of our audience continues to drop, and not because we are drawing fewer older people!

The rebuilding of the organ has given us a superior concert instrument; it is rare to find so complete an instrument, tonally adaptable to all styles of organ music, which speaks directly to the listener rather than bouncing back and forth against side walls. Organ music on Wall Street is very much in fashion!

Before the end of this year we hope to have a choral society and a string group comprised of talented Wall Street friends to assist in our noonday programs. We also hope to add live music to the special events that involve drama and dance.⁶⁹

Of note, King also raised the performer honorariums significantly, from \$17.50 to \$75.00, putting them in "...proper proportion to those being offered to performers of popular music in the "74 Below"⁷⁰ coffee house at Trinity.⁷¹ To help fund the noonday concerts during King's tenure, attempts were made in early 1973 to enlist the financial support of institutions and individuals in the Wall Street area. Unfortunately, King noted

⁶⁹ Larry King, *The Chimes*, The Newsletter of Trinity Church in the City of New York, September 20, 1970, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, 850/27.

⁷⁰ A coffee house in the basement of 74 Trinity Place (dubbed "74 Below"), a part of the weekday ministry begun by Vicar Donald Woodward and created by the Rev. John W. Moody. Brief Outline, page 9.

⁷¹ Brief Outline, page 11.

that there was "...great disappointment that no support came from corporations, whose employees were the primary beneficiaries of the programs."⁷² However, the Noonday concerts did not go without recognition from some in the Lower Manhattan business community. In November 1973, the Arts and Business Council recognized the contributions of the Noonday Program to the arts and quality of life in Lower Manhattan: "Through music, drama, poetry, and art, the Noonday Ministry reaches out to the thousands who spend a large part of their lives in otherwise sterile surroundings....Trinity Church remains and will continue to be a focus in improving the quality of life for those who will live and work there."⁷³ Another award was received a decade later, in April 1983, from the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, for enhancing the cultural life of the Wall Street community through in part the Weekday concert series.⁷⁴ These awards were due in no small part to King's ability to create programs of interest and draw varying artists, and thus audiences, to the series.

Trinity's budget devastation in 1975 led to a serious reduction in honorariums for the noonday concert artists, but concerts continued twice weekly: at Trinity on Thursdays at 12:45 P.M. and at Trinity's St. Paul's Chapel on Wednesdays at 12:30 P.M.⁷⁵ By October 1975, however, all budget funding for the noonday concerts had been expended, so King and his associate, James Simms, created Musical Meditations for the remaining

⁷² Brief Outline, page 22

⁷³ Brief Outline, pg. 24. The recognition continued: "...With the future of Lower Manhattan changing rapidly from a totally commercial area to one that will soon see thousands of residents, Trinity Church remains and will continue to be a focus in improving the quality of life for those who will live and work there."

⁷⁴ Brief Outline, page 44.

⁷⁵ Brief Outline, page 27.

Thursdays of 1975.⁷⁶ King, in describing the seven “ingredients” of these meditations, reveals his great skill at creating unique programs to draw the interest of attendees:

Mysticism: something one might hear before a divine service in a distinguished house of prayer.

Order: a short piece of counterpoint: the almost mathematical combination of two or more melodies working together to produce harmony.

Prophecy: a new piece expressing the artist’s perception of the human condition in sound.

Remembrance: something melodious or perhaps fun which will remind many people of another day.

Distinction: a classic of organ literature which has, or will outlive us all.

Contemplation: a piece which is quiet and restful.

Triumph: a piece which expresses our determination to go forth in a renewed spirit and meet with confidence the challenges which await us.

King noted that the “Remembrance” meditations were the most memorable, including improvisations and arrangements of Sullivan’s *Lost Chord*, Paul McCartney’s *Yesterday*, and Meyerbeer’s *Coronation March*.⁷⁷

For a number of years, a panel of lay people within the parish worked under King’s guidance to select the performers for the Noonday Concerts. In the fall of 1976, Thomas Horan assumed responsibilities of overseeing the noonday concert auditions, booking the concerts, and overseeing the performances.⁷⁸ In 1980, King hired David Varnum, a professional singer in the Trinity Choir, as part-time Noonday Concert

⁷⁶ Brief Outline, page 29.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Brief Outline, page 31.

manager and in 1983 this position increased to eighty-percent of full-time status.⁷⁹ Later that year, inspired by King's ministry with the Family Choir (to be discussed later in this document), Varnum created a Concerts-to-Go ministry. The program sent Noonday Concert artists at a reduced honorarium into nursing homes through the city, and the first concert was presented on September 23, 1983.⁸⁰ By June 1987, Concerts-to-Go completed concerts in every metropolitan-area nursing home.⁸¹

The Choir of Trinity Church

Of the two choirs in existence at Trinity during King's tenure, the most representative of traditional music was the Choir of Trinity Church (the Family Choir being the second choir, to be discussed in the following chapter). Trinity's well-established and recognized choral tradition goes back to the early eighteenth century; indeed, the music at Trinity Church had been a vital force since the colonial era. In June 1888, H. E. Krehbiel wrote in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*:

“Trinity Church was the cradle of choral culture in New York....all inquiries touching the cultivation of choral music in New York eventually discover Trinity Church as its fountainhead. In the early part of the 18th century Trinity Church was the most powerful agency at work in New York for the advancement of music. Indeed, until it became a factor in the social and intellectual life of the city, church music seemed without hope.” The fashionable choirs in the other Episcopal Churches at this time were mixed quartets. These cultivated a sentimental and secular style of music, largely consisting of arrangements for four voices of popular arias and ballads; Palestrina and Bach are not strangers to (Trinity's) program.⁸²

⁷⁹ Brief Outline, page 44.

⁸⁰ Brief Outline, page 45.

⁸¹ Brief Outline, page 52.

⁸² Brief Outline, page 5.

Trinity's first choir was organized by William Tuckey, the Trinity Parish Clerk appointed in 1752 who also introduced Handel's *Messiah* to North America in 1770 at Trinity Church. Edward Hodges, appointed organist in 1846 as the third church building was completed, developed a choir of men and boys which continued for over a century until 1967, remaining a model through that time for other churches. When King arrived at Trinity in 1968, the existing choir consisted of eighteen men. The tradition of the boy trebles was dissolved the previous year by the Vestry upon the recommendation of King's predecessor, Dr. George Mead.⁸³ Mead, who had been organist since 1941, cited the "hopelessness" of recruiting the boys for the choir in the church's urban situation when encouraging the change from boys to eighteen men.⁸⁴ However, prior to his appointment at Trinity, King convinced the Vestry to keep the possibility open for the eventual re-establishment of the men and boys choir, and convinced the Rector to allow women to sing in the choir, enabling use of the complete liturgical musical literature.⁸⁵ For unknown reasons – perhaps he found it just as hopeless to recruit as his predecessor did – King never revived the men and boys choir at Trinity; this author found no record or mention, by King or anyone else, of an attempt to do so after he began work at Trinity. It does show, however, that he was willing to think outside the box by substituting women for boys, something that came much later to other cathedrals around the country. It is of little doubt, given King's study in England and his work at St. Paul's in San Diego, that King would have seriously considered a men and boys choir for Trinity.

⁸³ Brief Outline, page 6.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

King did bring women into the choir, and in August 1968, he auditioned singers for an eighteen-voice choir (6-4-4-4). It was one of the first Manhattan church choirs singing with what is commonly referred to now as “straight-tone.” King rehired most of the senior men due to their ability to read music and blend, but the more recent hires, primarily vocal majors from The Juilliard School of Music, could do neither; King was shocked at the inability of sopranos and altos to sight-read music and sing without vibrato.⁸⁶ King stated for the record that he “...was disturbed that the initial mixed choir did not match the vocal or musical standards of his adult volunteer singers in San Diego.”⁸⁷

This newly formed choir sang for the first time on September 22, 1968, singing Scarlatti’s *Exultate Deo* and Byrd’s *Ave verum corpus*.⁸⁸ Despite the apprehension on the part of the Rector and many traditionalists in the church regarding the new mixed choir, fearing it would sound like the “infamous Metropolitan Opera Chorus in which the sea of vibrating pitches obscures any relationship to musical line and harmony,” there was “instant relief” at the new Trinity Choir’s sound.⁸⁹

At some point fairly early in his tenure at Trinity, King reduced the number of paid singers in the Trinity Choir to a nucleus of fourteen, and accepted “qualified volunteers” to join the professionals via audition.⁹⁰ King did not require that the

⁸⁶ Brief Outline, page 7.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Brief Outline, page 8.

⁹⁰ Trinity Church Music Brochure, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, Box 852, Folder: Trinity Choir Brochures.

volunteers have formal voice training, but they needed to be able to read musical notation at sight, have a “clear, blending voice,” and to be willing to commit themselves to the full rehearsal and service schedule.⁹¹

King’s predecessors were each credited with introducing various musical genres to the Trinity choral repertoire. Arthur Henry Messiter, who served at Trinity from 1866-1897, is credited with introducing Victorian church music by English and American composers and masses and anthems by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert. Victor Baier, who served from 1897-1921, is credited with introducing Russian choral music. Channing Lefebvre, who served from 1922-1941, revived Tudor church music and introduced a significant amount of new American choral music.⁹²

King restored Tudor and Renaissance masterpieces (the Tudor having been dropped following Lefebvre’s tenure) to the Trinity Choir repertoire, and programmed these alongside repertoire from contemporary American and British composers.⁹³ King’s inclination to include contemporary literature alongside traditional masterpieces was seen from the start of his tenure at Trinity. In 1969 alone, King introduced Mass settings by Douglas Guest (*Missa Sarisburiensis*), Herbert Howells (*Collegium Regale*) and Kenneth Leighton (*Missa Brevis*), and anthems and motets by John McCabe, Pablo Casals, John Joubert, Leo Sowerby, Patrick Hadley, Gerald Finzi, Louie White, Ned Rorem, Joseph Goodman, Daniel Pinkham, and Edmund Rubbra.⁹⁴ Also, soon after his arrival at Trinity,

⁹¹ Trinity Church Music Brochure, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, Box 852, Folder: Trinity Choir Brochures.

⁹² Brief Outline, page 5.

⁹³ Brief Outline, page 8.

⁹⁴ Brief Outline, page 9.

King programmed Leo Sowerby's music for the services and noonday concerts, in memory of the composer who had recently died on July 7.⁹⁵ In 1970, King added more new repertoire, including the Howells' *Coventry Mass*, Vaughan Williams' *Mass in G Minor*, Messiaen's *O sacrum convivium*, Britten's *Antiphon*, and Lennox Berkeley's *Lord, when the sense of thy sweet grace*.⁹⁶

Throughout his career at Trinity, King was extraordinarily particular about the choice of singers. The Trinity Choir was considered by many at the time to be one of the finest choirs in New York City,⁹⁷ and one of the highest salaried choirs in NYC at the time.⁹⁸ King placed advertisements in newspapers, including an advertisement on the back page of *The Village Voice* in September 1970 seeking singers with "natural voices who can read music at sight."⁹⁹ David Varnum responded to this particular advertisement and was to King a "God-send to the bass section," having a "pleasant, natural voice with an excellent sense of pitch and exceptional sight-reading ability."¹⁰⁰ Varnum left the Trinity Choir in 1972, seeking to pursue a career in musical theatre, but returned regularly as a substitute.¹⁰¹ He returned as a full member of the Trinity Choir in January

⁹⁵ Brief Outline, page 8. Trinity Church Wall Street Archives. King performed Sowerby's *Symphony in G Major* on Thursday, September 26, the choir sang his *Service in G* and *Psalm 122* on Sunday, September 29, and the Assistant Organist Dennis G. Michno and trumpeter Howard Birnbaum performed his *Requiescat in Pace* and *Fantasy for Organ and Trumpet* on Tuesday, October 1.

⁹⁶ Brief Outline, page 15.

⁹⁷ John Walker.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Brief Outline, page 13.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Brief Outline, page 20.

1979,¹⁰² and in various capacities for many years, both part-time and full-time, served as a staff member to organize and supervise the noonday concerts and to continue the Concerts-to-Go ministry.¹⁰³ King described Varnum as “one of the most colorful characters on the face of the earth, one never knew what to expect when dialing the special telephone line for noonday concert information.”¹⁰⁴ Many of King’s singers were, and some remain to the present day, professional singers performing with top ensembles in the United States.¹⁰⁵

Since Trinity Church lacked acoustical ambiance, King and the choir did not enjoy singing in the gallery. Rehearsing in the Manning Choir Room (completed and dedicated in 1966) gave the ensemble a false sense of confidence, and once in the shallow gallery, the singers could not hear each other when divided on either side of the positive division, nor could they hear when “scrunched together” on the same side.¹⁰⁶ King said that the acoustics added nothing to the sound by the time it reached “the director’s ears.” King taped the anthems from microphones in the nave – to avoid, in his own words, “suicidal inclinations” when listening back to the anthems: “Performing in the gallery of Trinity Church is not a gratifying experience, nor is listening to the results.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² Brief Outline, page 35.

¹⁰³ Brief Outline, page 46.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Varnum currently sings with the American Bach Soloists and the San Francisco Symphony Chorus.

¹⁰⁶ Brief Outline, page 8.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

Ascension Day Services

Since the third Trinity church building was consecrated on Ascension Day in 1846, this festival day always featured a large annual service at Trinity, and conceivably illustrates best King's combination of traditional and innovative.¹⁰⁸ The Rector at the time of King's appointment, John Vernon Butler, gave King much leeway in his work at Trinity; however, the one thing Butler told King that he could not change was Trinity's traditional processional anthem on Ascension Day: "O Zion Blest City," from a long-forgotten oratorio entitled *The Crusaders*, by Henry Hiles (1826-1904).¹⁰⁹ Upon King's first Ascension Day at Trinity in 1969, apparently the choir "could barely rehearse [the anthem] through their snickers, but with the orchestral accompaniment further enhanced by the ceremonial, they found the completed product rather moving."¹¹⁰

The 125th Anniversary of the Consecration of Trinity Church occurred on May 20th, 1971. The tradition for Trinity's Ascension service had been to hire a full orchestra; however, for this anniversary in 1971, King scaled the full orchestra down to a brass ensemble. King had questioned the enormous expense of the music – the orchestra alone was \$2,275 for the 1970 service.¹¹¹ In King's mind, the lack of orchestra made the performance of the Hiles' processional "unthinkable," so King arranged the hymn *Hyfrydol* for brass, timpani and organ (set to the text "Alleluia, sing to Jesus") for a processional instead. This elimination of the Hiles' anthem brought "many expressions of

¹⁰⁸ Brief Outline, page 2.

¹⁰⁹ Brief Outline, page 10. Hiles was an English composer and organist, educated at University of Oxford, editor and contributor to *The Quarterly Musical Review*, faculty member at the Royal Manchester College of Music and held multiple church posts throughout his career.

¹¹⁰ Brief Outline, page 10.

¹¹¹ Brief Outline, page 17.

disappointment and fury.”¹¹² Apparently, the “complaints never stopped” even ten years later, so in 1982, King decided to “revive [the Hiles] once more, record the entire service, and issue it on a cassette which would be sold in the Trinity Parish Gift Shop.”¹¹³

Haydn’s *Missa Cellensis* was the mass setting for the service, and Hoiby’s *Ascension* the anthem. A new recording engineer was hired for this project, as David Smith, the regular engineer, was not available. King noted that the new engineer went for the “mike-down-the-throat” dead sound, which obviously did not resemble that which the congregation heard. A different version ended up being used on the cassette from the parish’s four-channel recording device which was also running at the time of recording.¹¹⁴

King’s adventurousness with regard to programming new music at Trinity, while mostly successful, was not without risk. King never seemed to shy away from trying new things, though, even at significant festival services. For the previously mentioned 125th anniversary Ascension Day service, New York City Mayor John V. Lindsay accepted the Rector’s invitation to attend. The Mayor was “...under fire from many groups at the time, and many security guards accompanied him” to Trinity.¹¹⁵ King related the outcome of his inclusion of new music within the service:

The premiere of Richard Felciano’s commissioned gradual, *Out of sight*, began at the conclusion of the Epistle with a choir member shouting “You, men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up;” Baritone David Varnum’s dramatic rendition threw the security forces into pandemonium, and the Churchwardens, flanking the Mayor in the first pew, glowered. John Lindsay, a highly cultured gentleman and

¹¹² Brief Outline, page 17.

¹¹³ Brief Outline, page 42.

¹¹⁴ Brief Outline, page 43.

¹¹⁵ Brief Outline, page 16.

a communicant of St. James' Parish pronounced the anthem "fascinating and very relevant," giving contemporary music in Trinity Church a stay of execution.¹¹⁶

Throughout the years, King continued to combine tradition with contemporary at the Ascension Day services. For the 1974 Ascension Day service, King maintained some tradition by featuring the Festival Te Deum and Sanctus from *The Consecration Service*, composed by Dr. Edward Hodges (organist at Trinity from 1839-1859) for the 1846 Trinity Church consecration.¹¹⁷ King included his own alterations as he typically did when he thought it was necessary for a composition's success: King stated that "[Hodges'] Te Deum was sung at nearly twice the metronome marking, and was quite effective at that speed."¹¹⁸ This need to alter the tempo is not surprising, however, given that George Templeton Strong wrote about Trinity's 1846 consecration service in his published diary, declaring that "the music was generally rather ponderous, as under Dr. Hodges' regimen one was prepared to find it."¹¹⁹ In almost complete contrast to the Hodges Te Deum, King once again included during the same service *Out of Sight* (1971), Trinity's commission by contemporary composer Felciano for chorus, organ, and electronic sounds, as the Offertory anthem.¹²⁰

Ascension Day 1975 was a comparatively stark service to previous years: the choir was reduced to twelve voices earlier that year due to the economic downturn, which rippled into Trinity's budget; all programs were given a percentage cut rather than

¹¹⁶ Brief Outline, page 16.

¹¹⁷ Brief Outline, page 26.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Brief Outline, page 3.

¹²⁰ Brief Outline, page 26.

“prioritizing parish functions.”¹²¹ In stark contrast to the contemporary music from prior years, King had the twelve singers sing Byrd’s *Mass for Four Voices* and Gregorian Propers.¹²²

The following year, Ascension Day 1976, an American setting, Albright’s *Mass in D*, was featured in celebration of the 200th birthday of the United States.¹²³ In 1977, King used the full instrumentation for Stravinsky’s *Mass*, and because of its brevity, the Creed was also sung.¹²⁴ In 1979, Lee Hoiby’s arrangement of his own setting of a John Donne poem for organ, brass quartet and timpani, *Ascension*, premiered; King had requested this smaller arrangement from the original setting which was commissioned for the dedication of the Washington National Cathedral central tower on Ascension Day, and had taken place outside with a very large force of brass, woodwind and percussion instruments.¹²⁵ Hoiby’s smaller scale arrangement for Trinity was greeted with great enthusiasm by both the congregation and composer.¹²⁶ Ascension Day 1980 featured Bruckner’s *Mass in E Minor*, and Hoiby’s *Ascension* was repeated with a more complete orchestration than King had used in 1979.¹²⁷

When Daniel Paul Matthews was instituted as Trinity’s new Rector in early 1987, King went back to the beginnings of Trinity’s Ascension Day service: not only did King

¹²¹ Brief Outline, page 27.

¹²² Brief Outline, page 28.

¹²³ Brief Outline, page 30.

¹²⁴ Brief Outline, page 32.

¹²⁵ Brief Outline, page 36.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Brief Outline, page 39.

revive Hiles's processional a second time, but he scheduled the Charles Gounod (1818-1893) *Messe Solennelle* which had been performed for seven years during the full-orchestra run at Trinity's Ascension Day services. The anthem was Gounod's *Unfold, ye portals everlasting*, and King reveled in his use of the organ at the conclusion of the anthem: "...over [the anthem's] final C major chord, King came in on a full-organ C major chord as a beginning to the offertory improvisation, proving to all that 155 ranks of Aeolian-Skinner is indeed the King of Instruments."¹²⁸ One wonders if this was as well-received by the clergy and congregation as it was in King's mind and recollection.

Other significant liturgical services throughout the year reveal King's implementation of traditional music within a creative context, as well as his interaction with clergy. On Ash Wednesday 1974, King programmed Gregorio Allegri's (c. 1582-1652) *Miserere*, utilizing soprano Joy Shepherd's choir-boy-like voice (with descants edited by David Willcocks). King noted that the Bishop of New York preached, and that they drew the largest crowd of any service in the year, "probably because the lines for ashes move more efficiently than they do in neighboring Roman parishes."¹²⁹

While at Trinity, King implemented several ideas that became what he called "instant tradition." One creative idea utilizing a traditional organ work within a traditional service was on Good Friday 1970 when King introduced "Crucifixion" from Dupré's *Passion Symphony* during the third hour of the Three Hour Liturgy.¹³⁰ King

¹²⁸ Brief Outline, page 51.

¹²⁹ Brief Outline, page 25.

¹³⁰ Brief Outline, page 12.

stated that it was so well received that it became an “instant tradition.”¹³¹ That inclusion continued as a successful tradition for years: Rev. Daniel Paul Matthews, who would become sixteenth Rector of Trinity in 1987, recalled the powerful effect of that piece during Good Friday services in the late 1980’s.¹³² Despite King’s reputation for including innovative, contemporary music during worship, the Good Friday service in 1970 is a perfect example of King’s equal ability to plan and execute traditional worship services: the service included the full choir singing motets by Tomás Luis de Victoria (c.1548-1611), Marc’Antonio Ingeneri (c.1535-1592) and William Byrd (c.1539-1623), a soprano singing “Bleed and Break” from J. S. Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*, and chorale preludes played by King on the organ.¹³³

Another instance that became an “instant tradition” began on Christmas Eve 1972. The Rector’s staff had urged that the extended musical prelude prior to the service be replaced by an old-fashioned carol sing around the piano. Participants were asked to select the carols, but several requests for unknown carols “dampened the spirit a bit.”¹³⁴ King predicted it would be “considered a disaster” by those expecting the “usual esoteric things” before this service, but King was wrong – it was enthusiastically received, despite the fact that the “participants’ pew seats were taken when they returned to the pews for the actual service.”¹³⁵ This became another “instant-tradition” at Trinity, with the inclusion of pre-selected song-sheets with well-known carols.¹³⁶

¹³¹ Brief Outline, page 12.

¹³² Daniel Paul Matthews, interview by author, 15 February 2016.

¹³³ Brief Outline, page 12.

¹³⁴ Brief Outline, page 22.

**Creative and Contemporary Ventures:
“The Church as Patron of the Arts and Keeper of the Artists”**

As would become evident throughout King’s work at Trinity, one of his extraordinary skills was the ability to creatively and successfully introduce contemporary or “alternative” music into a church setting. Well-versed in the history of ancient music and the church, King understood that Western Music would not be in existence without the church.¹³⁷ He firmly believed in and worked towards the goal of returning the church to its role as a “patron of the arts and keeper of the artists”¹³⁸ as it stood until the nineteenth century, and a place where the “new sounds of any decade were first heard in cathedrals and great churches.”¹³⁹ King noted on the program for one of many concerts at Trinity: “Most of today’s congregations would have run Bach out of town, because his music did not sound traditional, as did the music of Palestrina!”¹⁴⁰ This philosophy was the basis for many of King’s ventures at Trinity, and for what King became well known.

Rev. John Butler, the Rector at the time of King’s hiring, fully supported the variety of artistic and creative expansions of the music program under King’s leadership. In 1969, a three-month summer arts festival was implemented at Trinity; in a New York Times article, Butler said “We are trying to make the church more relevant to people’s

¹³⁵ Brief Outline, page 22.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Larry King notes, Box 857/171, File 31, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, NY.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ *Sounds of the Seventies* brochure, Box 864/178, File 15, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, NY.

¹⁴⁰ Praise the Lord with a Groovy Sound program, Box 855, Trinity Wall Street Archives, New York, NY.

experience, to change the note of penitential gloom and stiffness associated with it. Anything that is creative is religious in my book.”¹⁴¹

“Praise the Lord With a Groovy Sound” and “Sounds of the Seventies”

King’s earliest endeavor in regard to truly innovative programming took place one year after he started at Trinity, in August 1969. King incorporated a short three-program series into the existing Noonday Concerts, and titled it “Praise the Lord with a Groovy Sound.” This series featured Christopher Tree, a well-known folk artist, Novella Nelson, a popular soul/blues singer, and the rock group Mind Garage.¹⁴² Mind Garage performed the third concert on August 5, 1969. As one of the first Christian rock bands, Mind Garage fit well into King’s vision of music and the church: the group’s stated interest in bringing contemporary rock music into the church, noting that Bach and Luther used tavern songs in their day, led them to write “Electric Liturgy” for use during church services in place of traditional mass settings.¹⁴³ The priests at West Virginia University, who had encouraged the members of Mind Garage to pursue sacred rock, stated: “What they are doing, is to contemporize religious music. Make it for people today, much as Martin Luther or John Wesley did.”¹⁴⁴

As evidenced by bringing Mind Garage to Trinity, the rock groups King secured for performance at Trinity truly were on the cutting edge of the contemporary and

¹⁴¹ *The New York Times*, Thursday, 5 June 1969, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, 181.

¹⁴² Brief Outline, page 10.

¹⁴³ Among other churches, this liturgy was used at Princeton University Chapel.

¹⁴⁴ <http://www.mindgarage.com/alastmass.html>, accessed 7 December 2013.

popular music scene. Mind Garage's manager informed the band members while they were still at Trinity following their concert that the band had been invited to Woodstock, set to begin just ten days later on August 15, but the band declined, not realizing the significance of this gig.¹⁴⁵ The Mind Garage concert also apparently made a big impact at Trinity: the concert made the NBC Nightly News Huntley Brinkley Report the following Friday night, using footage that NBC had filmed at the concert.¹⁴⁶ This appearance on the newscast apparently recalled "...the Rector from his Cape Cod summer retreat to respond to vestry queries."¹⁴⁷

Regardless of any surprise by Trinity parishioners or Vestry over the Mind Garage concert, "Praise the Lord with a Groovy Sound" was a success, and the series would return; it was popular enough that King expanded and continued it for five summers, changing its name in 1971 to "Sounds of the Seventies."¹⁴⁸ Other groups that performed in following years included the New York Rock Ensemble (a group of friends that met while they were students at The Juilliard School, including the well-known film score composer, Michael Kamen), The Seventh Century, John Baldry, Dust, The Elvin Jones Quartet, and The Institutional Church Radio Choir.¹⁴⁹

In June 1972 King incorporated a "Sounds of the Seventies" concert into a reunion for alumni of the Union Theological Seminary School of Music. A service with music by Palestrina, Bach, and electronic and rock music was followed by a concert

¹⁴⁵ <http://www.mindgarage.com/woodstock.html>, accessed 7 December 2013.

¹⁴⁶ <http://www.mindgarage.com/woodstock.html>, accessed 7 December 2013 and Brief History, page 10.

¹⁴⁷ Brief History, page 10.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Brief Outline, page 11.

featuring Dust. After the service some alumni remained, and some were in a “state of shock” as King fielded questions at the luncheon which followed.¹⁵⁰ Presumably it would have been unfathomable for church musicians to even consider incorporating “secular” styles of music within a church service.

On July 15, 1970, following a noon-day service, and the day after that year’s final “Praise the Lord with a Groovy Sound” concert at Trinity, Trinity hosted a symposium planned by King entitled “Rock ‘n Rap.” The event featured Father Moody of Trinity, the performers from the Communication Workshop Rock ensemble, two disc jockeys from a local radio station WNEW, and King himself. The intent was to educate people on the music that King incorporated into Trinity’s programming.¹⁵¹ In the Trinity newsletter, King reflected on the successful event, saying they “...encountered a church filled with young and old.”¹⁵²

Fr. Moody and I explained why we included this kind of music in our concert series; our disc jockey guests spoke of the relationship of this music to the youth culture; the Communication Workshop demonstrated their techniques of performing and composing both individually and collectively, and I joined them to demonstrate the relationship of rock to so-called “classical music.” The audience was then given the opportunity to question and challenge us, which they did with enthusiasm. The outcome was increased appreciation for this kind of music and a better understanding of what we are trying to do on the part of those over 30, and assurance to those under 30 that we are not using their music as a gimmick.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Brief Outline, page 20.

¹⁵¹ Larry King, *The Chimes*, The Newsletter of Trinity Church in the City of New York, September 20, 1970, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, Box 850/27.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Larry King, *The Chimes*, The Newsletter of Trinity Church in the City of New York, September 20, 1970, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, 850/27.

King noted that education of the community and parish regarding the unique musical work being done at Trinity was indeed a goal for 1970, after a musically adventurous 1969:

If innovation was the key word for Trinity's musical ministry in 1969, communication could well be considered our new emphasis in 1970. Too frequently we assume everyone understands what we are doing, but the enthusiastic response to a few words on what is about to take place has encouraged us to verbally communicate on a regular basis; this has resulted in greater understanding and support from our regular friends and has attracted many new followers.¹⁵⁴

King also noted his other "...less spectacular attempts at communication" during 1970, including:

...introductions of artists and explanatory notes on pieces to be performed at regular recitals, allowing people to sit near the console at organ recitals where they can watch the performer, and even verbal preparation on Whitsunday for the electronic music that was to be performed during the service.¹⁵⁵

He indicated future educational opportunities that year as well:

On three Sundays in October, I will lead a seminar on the Church and Music following breakfast. This is designed to help members of our regular Sunday congregation understand the historical meanings of Church music, what we are trying to accomplish with liturgical music, and to increase their appreciation of different kinds of music.¹⁵⁶

That Fall, on October 8, 1970, the Communication Workshop and King presented a "Concert for Pipe Organ and Rock Ensemble" on the Noonday series.¹⁵⁷ The program featured King playing J. S. Bach's Prelude in G Major (BWV number unspecified) and

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ "Concert for Pipe Organ and Rock Ensemble" Program, October 8, 1970, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Box 850/29.

three songs original to the Communication Workshop, with King and five other musicians on organ, guitar, electric piano, vocals, and drums.¹⁵⁸ They gave another concert on the Noonday series just prior to Christmas that year with the following program, with six performers playing bells, percussion, guitar, organ, piano, and singing vocals.¹⁵⁹

I

Rejoice, Beloved Christians	J. S. Bach – Larry King
O Come All Ye Faithful	J. F. Wade – The Communication Workshop
What Child is This?	Traditional English – Mario Giacalone
Angels We Have Heard On High	Traditional French – King and The Workshop

II – Material composed by Robert Bruce Becker

(Me & Joey) Just Think’n

Wisdom of the Countryside

Mystique in F# (Concerto for Pipe Organ and Rock Orchestra)¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ “The Communication Workshop, Mario Giacalone, Larry King In Concert” Program, December 21, 1970. Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, Box 850/24.

¹⁶⁰ “The Communication Workshop, Mario Giacalone, Larry King In Concert” Program, December 21, 1970.

The 1971 Conference: “Rock, Folk, Pop and the Church”

One way in which King was instrumental in supporting contemporary music, beyond simply including it within services or concerts at Trinity, was through support for colleagues by his arranging and participating in educational conferences and seminars. In 1971 (October 4-5), King organized a two-day national conference at Trinity entitled “Rock, Folk, Pop and the Church,” with the intent of equipping church musicians who felt inadequate when using folk or rock music in the church. Speakers at the symposium included a who’s who of the organ and popular music world: Leonard Raver, Alec Wyton, a New York City disc jockey, as well as a composer’s forum featuring well-known songwriter and performer Michael Kamen (also the creative force behind and performer with The New York Rock Ensemble), Stephen Schwartz (composer of “Godspell”), and Galt McDermott (composer of the Broadway smash-hit “Hair”).¹⁶¹ King even wrote to twenty-three year old Andrew Lloyd Webber in hopes he would participate in the composers’ forum. Webber happened to be in New York City at the time for the opening of his “splendid” (in the words of King) rock-opera *Jesus Christ Superstar*.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ Brief Outline, page 18.

¹⁶² Larry King, Letter to Andrew Lloyd Webber, 22 September 1971, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: Correspondence.



Figure 3.1. Composers Forum at “Rock, Folk, Pop and the Church” Conference.
L to R: Michael Kamen, Larry King, Stephen Schwartz, Galt McDermott.
Source: Trinity Church Wall Street Archives

Trinity Mass

Following the 1970 concert when the New York Rock Ensemble opened the “Praise the Lord with a Groovy Sound” series to an overflowing audience, King developed a professional relationship with Kamen.¹⁶³ This connection continued in 1972, when Trinity commissioned Kamen to compose a musical setting of the trial liturgy in “rock” style.¹⁶⁴ Trinity’s solicitation of this mass was the “logical result of Trinity’s recognition that rock music has succeeded in communicating religious and moral ideas to

¹⁶³ Brief Outline, page 10.

¹⁶⁴ Brief Outline, page 18.

many young people whose ears are deaf to the spoken words of the church.”¹⁶⁵ Indeed, many of the young people that became involved in Trinity’s ministry via the weekday programs wished for such a musical setting.¹⁶⁶ King’s letter to Kamen requesting this commission shows King’s awareness of the need for worthwhile liturgical settings, in contrast to the many poor settings being written:

Dear Mike,

Enclosed is a rather tacky piece of music we are using regularly at our services here. The reason for my including it is that it has the current texts of the Episcopal Liturgy. Could you look it over and give some thought as to how much you would charge us to write a musical setting of these words in honest rock idiom, without bending to any traditional Victorian concepts of what church music should sound like! I will give you a call in a few days, for I would like very much to see Trinity commission you to do this for us, in order that we have something to combat the dreary pseudo attempts that constantly come to my desk.

Cheers,
Larry¹⁶⁷

Kamen agreed to write the setting, and it premiered as the Trinity Mass on June 14, 1972 during a Wednesday noon Eucharist and was repeated the following Sunday, June 18.¹⁶⁸ Sidhartha, a Trinity based rock group given rehearsal privileges in Trinity’s coffee house 74 Below in exchange for providing music for Trinity services, performed the Mass.¹⁶⁹ This rock ensemble comprised of four members: Tom Horan, keyboards, Mark Carroll,

¹⁶⁵ Brief Outline, page 18.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Larry King, Letter to Michael Kamen, 17 February 1972, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: Correspondence.

¹⁶⁸ Brief Outline, page 20.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

vocals and bass, Ted Dunn, guitar, and Nicholas Fossella, drums.¹⁷⁰ King combined traditional repertoire with this commission: during the same service premiering Kamen's Mass, the Trinity choir also sang "In the beginning of creation" by Daniel Pinkham and J. S. Bach's Sixth Motet, "Lobet den Herrn."



Figure 3.2. SIDHARTHA rock ensemble preparing for the premiere of Kamen's Trinity Mass.

L to R: Thomas Horan, Michael Kamen, Nick Fossella, Larry King, Ted Dunn, Mark Carroll

Source: Trinity Church Wall Street Archives

¹⁷⁰ Brief Outline, page 20.

As he would a few times during his tenure at Trinity, on the Sunday of the Trinity Mass premiere, June 18, 1972, King gave the sermon. While the basis for King's sermon on this particular Sunday was the introduction of the Kamen Mass, it is an extraordinary document and statement of beliefs; it is valuable for any present-day church musician, and it enlightens us to King's philosophy and sums up his ministry better than any other document found. His sermon is excerpted with highlights here in the body of this document, but the entire sermon is included in Appendix A.

Many of you are here today because it is your custom to worship God in Trinity Church each Sunday; your openness and support of contemporary musical expressions have paved the way for the new music you are hearing this morning. Others are here specifically to hear Michael Kamen's Mass, and you may wonder what we are trying to accomplish.

If my remarks seem to be somewhat on the defensive, it is because we will be criticized by a few of you here, and by many outside: basically because we have utilized a musical idiom which has yet to receive universal acceptance, and which is thought by some to make house plants die and to cause nice children to turn into dope addicts. I hope to ease discomfort for some, and give rationale to those of you who will have the opportunity to champion this music achievement. Music has played an important role in worship from the beginning of time. The Christian Church especially nurtured this art form, preserved it, and until the end of the 18th century was the major patron of composers. In those days, words alone separated church music from secular music. On hearing the music itself, we cannot easily distinguish a church anthem by Gibbons from one of his secular madrigals, or a Bach sacred cantata from his coffee cantata. In the nineteenth century, the Church lost its nerve, and the evolution of music was turned over to the concert hall. Church musicians would dare present newer music only after its idiom had been accepted by the public at large, by which time it was generally considered "old hat" in the artistic world. It is no wonder, then, that few major composers have created anything for church services in the last 150 years.....

Why, then, a rock mass, commissioned by and performed in a parish church which was established when Bach was only twelve years old, and which, since that time, has had no small amount of influence on church music in this country? The new translations of our liturgical songs require us to either adapt old music to accommodate changed metres (sic), or to create new music for them. The former, in addition to being musically dishonest, denies the new words the powers of that music which best expresses today's musical achievements. Our integrity, then,

requires us to strive for this very thing, and in every worthy contemporary musical idiom....

It is especially important that rock music be recognized in this historic and influential parish. We must continue to be on the “cutting-edge” of music in worship: experimenting with and commissioning (as few other places can) various forms of the music of our day---pushing into the future, and all the while retaining the great treasures of our musical heritage.

For some of you, I hope this setting of the Mass will broaden your scope of music appreciation; for others, I hope it will strengthen the impact of the words of the liturgy on your hearts and minds; this it did for many on Wednesday. It will fulfill a need by parishes throughout the country which have been attempting folk and rock masses that were composed by priests or nuns who have a knowledge of three guitar chords and a good memory for the harmonies and melodies of “Home on the range” and “Five foot two, eyes of blue.” What a put on this has been for young people, and what a blow to the integrity of the Church!....

Our concepts of public worship today give us only one criterion for the acceptance or rejection of liturgical music—and that is quality. Unfortunately, the very best music can bore, and it can offend. The old masters bore many, and the new sounds offend others. However, those who are bored or offended by good music can remedy that situation by learning what it’s all about—by “getting into it.” Bad music, on the other hand, is indefensible---whether it be baroque, rock, renaissance or electronic. There is no recourse for those who know quality other than to flee, and public worship in a place such as this is not meant to exclude. Much as we like to think that what we like is good, and what we dislike is bad, it takes a trained musician to know the difference. This puts an enormous weight on me as Music Director of this Church, and calls for a great amount of trust from you.

“Heavy” is a word frequently used by young people today – meaning important, deep, full of meaning. They frequently use it in reference to music – the kind to which you want to give your full attention. The Church, its worship and my faith are very heavy things to me. While I’m one of the Church’s biggest critics I have given it my life: a heavy commitment. In going beyond the safe music which history has already proved to be good, I have assumed an especially heavy responsibility. I firmly believe that our faith and our public worship call for heavy music – be it Bach, or rock. I feel certain that we have that here today.¹⁷¹

This sermon illustrates that part of King’s own mission at Trinity included educating the congregation, and wider community, about music in and outside of the

¹⁷¹ Larry King, sermon on 18 June 1972, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y.

church. In 1972, the year following that sermon, King created an educational “Lunch with Larry” series, featuring monthly discussions on Fridays at 12:45 P.M. King’s creative juices are evident in the titles he gave each discussion.

January 21 – One Man’s Music is Another’s Noise
A look at the philosophy of Trinity’s music program

February 18 – Elegant Echoes of Eternity
A look at choral music of the renaissance

May 26 – Praise Him with Computers and the Sound of the Jet
A look at electronic music

June 16 – Upon This Church Will I Build My Rock
A look at rock music

July 14 – Will Tomorrow’s J. S. Bach Please Stand Up!
A look at where music is going

March 17 – Genius with a Minimum of Notes
A look at the music of Johann Sebastian Bach

April 21 – The Land of Byrd, Britten and the Beatles
A look at musical creativity in Britain¹⁷²

While King received good support from the Trinity staff and clergy, opportunities such as “Lunch with Larry” were clearly still needed for his Trinity colleagues as well. In a memo, King encouraged his colleagues to attend the particular discussion entitled “Praise Him with Computers and the Sound of the Jet:” “I would like to urge those of you who have been bewildered and/or upset by the use of electronic music in Trinity to come....If understanding doesn’t alleviate the pain, it lessens it...”¹⁷³

¹⁷² “Lunch with Larry” flyer, Trinity Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Box 857/256, File 31.

¹⁷³ “Lessening of Pain,” May 25, 1972 memo from Larry King to Trinity staff, Trinity Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Box 857/258, File 31.

Archangel and *Missa Archangelus*

In the fall of 1972, on the heels of the Trinity Mass commission and premiere, King secured the financial support and blessing of the Vestry, the Congregational Music Advisory Board, and the Downtown Ministries Council to pursue an “Experimental Music Pilot Project” (EMPP).¹⁷⁴ King stated: “It is our hope to combine elements of what is sometimes called ‘symphonic rock’ and mainstream classical music into a liturgical vehicle that will reflect the musical spirit of 1973.”¹⁷⁵

We are convinced that German chorales and plainsong hymns are not the best answer for church music in the 1970’s, but we are convinced that the answer is not in current imitations of “camp-fire” music of the 1950’s. We sincerely hope that in our six month period of experimenting we can develop something that we will ALL want to include in our permanent repertoire.¹⁷⁶

To fulfill this objective, King collaborated with two other musicians on this project:

Glenn Billingsley and Dora Schively, and together adopted the group name Archangel.¹⁷⁷

King had hired Billingsley in early 1972 for the EMPP due to his experience in rock music, eventually playing electric bass and guitar when Archangel was founded, but he would become an integral part of the music ministry at Trinity for many years.

Billingsley was also a voice major in the Master of Sacred Music degree program at Union Theological Seminary at the time and in April 1972 he would begin singing with

¹⁷⁴ “Introducing Archangel,” Trinity Church Newsletter “The Chimes,” February 25, 1973, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Box 846.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ It is possible that King’s previous house band, Sidhartha, provided inspiration for Archangel: Sidhartha had just premiered Kamen’s Trinity Mass in the Summer 1972, and King began inquiries into the EMPP in Fall 1972, which led to the founding of Archangel. Though records may exist proving otherwise, the author found no mention of Sidhartha beyond the Kamen mass project.

the professional Trinity Choir, remaining a singer on and off for a number of years.¹⁷⁸

Schively, a physician, played percussion and electric piano/harpsichord with Archangel.¹⁷⁹

The results of the EMPP were heard at Trinity the following year.¹⁸⁰ Archangel participated in regular Sunday services at Trinity and presented special services as well.¹⁸¹ King stated:

Our immediate objectives are to “orchestrate” our current “People’s Music” for the trial services..., create several new hymn tunes and to develop another setting of the ICET [International Consultation on English Texts] mass translations for instruments, choir and congregation.¹⁸²

This last objective was one of King’s main goals for the project: writing a new mass setting for Trinity, which later bore fruit as *Missa Archangelus*. King, always an extremely practical church musician, desired not simply to utilize “...the musical idiom of the young people...” but to create and combine that idiom with “...melodies that [are] singable by congregations.”¹⁸³ In collaborating on this new mass setting, Archangel attempted to create a “...fully contemporary setting (in harmony, rhythm and instrumentation) which could be sung by those people in the congregation who like to sing, and which would be exciting to hear by those who prefer not to sing.”¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁸ Glenn Billingsley, interview by author, February 23, 2016.

¹⁷⁹ “Introducing Archangel.”

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Brief Outline, page 21.

¹⁸² “Introducing Archangel.”

¹⁸³ Brief Outline, page 22.

¹⁸⁴ *Missa Archangelus* evaluation, Trinity Church Wall Street archives, New York, N.Y., Box 846.

The composition of *Missa Archangelus* was a group effort: Schively was responsible for percussion, Billingsley for the electric bass and vocals, and King "...was heard on the mighty Aeolian-Skinner organ and on the synthesizer, an imposing electronic device capable of producing sounds over the entire range of audible frequencies. This instrument can provide a varied and almost inexhaustible fund of sound to draw on..."¹⁸⁵ On assignment from King, and despite feeling "ill-equipped" to do so, Billingsley composed the "Gloria."¹⁸⁶ Billingsley recalled that he wanted to use a theme from Vaughan Williams' Fifth Symphony, "a bad idea from which Larry tried unsuccessfully to dissuade me."¹⁸⁷ Billingsley's "Gloria" was used initially, but was eventually replaced by a new setting written by King, and in Billingsley's words, written "...infinitely more skillfully!"¹⁸⁸ King composed all other mass movements.¹⁸⁹

At the time of the start of Archangel, in Spring of 1973, King arranged for Trinity to purchase a synthesizer, an Arp 2600, to use with the group.¹⁹⁰ With the help of Thomas A. Martin, curator of the Trinity organ at the time, King made the synthesizer playable from the Swell manual of the gallery console.¹⁹¹ Additional equipment for use with the project included:

¹⁸⁵ Trinity Church Newsletter, Week of June 3, 1973, Trinity Church Wall Street archives, New York, N.Y., Box 846/108.

¹⁸⁶ Glenn Billingsley.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ "After moving to Philadelphia, I returned [to Trinity] at one point to discover that Larry had written a new Gloria." Glenn Billingsley interview.

¹⁸⁹ Glenn Billingsley.

¹⁹⁰ Brief Outline, page 22.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

...a Shure system for amplifying the choir when it performed to experimental project accompaniments, Sunn amplifiers and speakers for bass guitar and synthesizer, and Voice of the Theater speakers for solo vocal amplification. The first four-channel tape recorder, a TEAC 3340, was also included for pre-recording capability.¹⁹²

Missa Archangelus premiered on May 20, 1973 at a Sunday service at Trinity, with the Billingsley “Gloria” and the “Sanctus” and “Lord’s Prayer” by King.¹⁹³ King reflected on the introduction of the mass to the congregation:

Although members of Trinity Church have long since become accustomed to the use of prerecorded electric tape, the rushing wind of the synthesizer, and a modern setting of the Mass by Mr. King, these past few Sundays have been something new for everyone.

After Trinity had sung the setting for the seventh time during a morning worship service, King, as was typical, sought feedback from the congregation, including an evaluation form in the morning service bulletin. In the event someone really disliked the mass, King offered the response of “never” following the question “How often would you like it scheduled in the future?”¹⁹⁴ Schively did her own educating of the congregation:

...although the new setting might possibly seem complicated to the listener on a first (perhaps even a second) hearing, the congregational part is actually considerably simpler than, for example, the [Healey] Willan setting. What makes it “different” from the latter is perhaps, the unfamiliarity of its style, including the texture of its harmonic and rhythmic content and its instrumentation, including the fairly unfamiliar synthesized sounds, the sound of the electronic bass guitar, and the wide variety of percussive effects available from the drums, cymbals, gongs and tubular chimes, all of which have been utilized in the new setting. But, she adds, the new melodies to which the people will sing the familiar words of the Mass are quite simple, and in a short time are likely to be as well known to the congregation as the familiar settings in the hymnal. As for the instrumentation and style, admittedly “strange” at present, it is a matter of hearing and participating over a period of time, to realize a sense of fitness and balance between its

¹⁹² Brief Outline, page 22.

¹⁹³ Brief Outline, page 23.

¹⁹⁴ *Missa Archangelus* evaluation.

component parts. Furthermore, the advantage of a new setting which draws from the highly rhythmic and inventive style of the “rock” idiom is that it has the possibility of greater popular use which in our words can be an effective way of preaching the Gospel beyond its initial use in worship.¹⁹⁵

Trinity Church continued to sing this mass through the spring and summer of 1973.¹⁹⁶ In February 1974, King reintroduced *Missa Archangelus* with a new setting of the “Gloria,” composed by King which was thought to be more singable by the congregation. Billingsley, having moved to Philadelphia the previous fall upon his graduation from Union Theological Seminary, had continued to commute to New York City from Philadelphia through the fall to rehearse, perform and record with Archangel, but by 1974 was no longer with the group as a regular.¹⁹⁷ Thus, Archangel was re-organized with Louis Giminez, a talented young graduate of Music and Arts High School as lead guitarist, John Rotondi as bass guitarist, and Zachary Margaritas on drums.¹⁹⁸ Dora Schively “...devoted herself to the chimes and synthesizer,” and King continued on the organ and doing most of the composing.¹⁹⁹

On July 13, 1975, the EMPP wound up its work at a 2pm service with the music of Archangel. The recording was available for sale, and all of the Archangel compositions on the album were performed as part of the free-form service.²⁰⁰ *Missa Archangelus* continued to be sung at Trinity services for many years. It was used during

¹⁹⁵ Trinity Church Newsletter, Week of June 3, 1973, Trinity Church Wall Street archives, New York, N.Y., Box 846/108.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Glenn Billingsley.

¹⁹⁸ Brief Outline, page 23 and Billingsley Interview.

¹⁹⁹ Brief Outline, page 25.

²⁰⁰ Brief Outline, page 28.

the Opening Service of the Trinity Institute (held at Trinity) in 1979. They celebrated by offering Trinity's "...Sunday morning style liturgy with *Missa Archangelus*, and motets by Palestrina, Tallis and Jacob Handl" and announcing that this special Institute service was to be permanently moved to Trinity as it had typically been held at other locations.²⁰¹ In 1980 *Missa Archangelus* (with brass and timpani) was used for the Pentecost service with the newly consecrated Suffragan Bishop of New York, Rt. Rev. Walter DeCosta Dennis and the choir sang Victoria's *Ecce sacerdos magnus* at the Procession.²⁰²

²⁰¹ Brief Outline, page 35.

²⁰² Brief Outline, page 39.



FIGURE 3.3. Archangel performing in the Trinity Gallery.
L to R: Larry King, Dora Schively, Glenn Billingsley.
Source: Trinity Church Wall Street Archives



FIGURE 3.4. Archangel in the Trinity Church graveyard. The Stock Exchange is visible in the background.

L to R: Dora Schively, Larry King, Glenn Billingsley.

Source: Trinity Church Wall Street Archives



FIGURE 3.5. Archangel in front of one of the Trinity Church doors.
Top to Bottom: Larry King, Glenn Billingsley, Dora Schively.
Source: Glenn Billingsley

Educational Opportunities

King's connection with Michael Kamen continued in May 1979, when King and the Trinity Music department joined with the Trinity Institute to present a national conference held at Calvary/St. George's Church in Gramercy Park, entitled "Towards a Theology of Church Music."²⁰³ The Trinity Choir opened the conference with a concert of music composed between 1971-1977, featuring William Albright's *Mass in D* and *The Chichester Mass*. Lectures by theologian Jeffery Rowthorn and composers Felciano and John Corigliano were heard and popular music and its implications for the church were explored by composer-performers Kamen and Peter Yarrow.²⁰⁴ The concluding Eucharist at St. George's featured the communion service by Felciano (which can be found in the Episcopal *Hymnal 1982*), Psalm 72 sung to a whole-tone Gregorian-like chant arranged by Larry King, and new hymn-tunes by Calvin Hampton²⁰⁵ ("Abreu"), David Hurd ("King"), and Albright's *Alleluia Super-Round*.²⁰⁶

King also offered educational opportunities within the parish community. In Fall 1982, Trinity offered the Creative Music Workshop, advertised as offering "a challenging new opportunity for those in our parish and community who would like to be trained to perform on musical instruments in the festive public worship services and in the Family

²⁰³ Brief Outline, page 35.

²⁰⁴ Brief Outline, page 36. Yarrow was a founding member of Peter, Paul, and Mary, a very popular folk/rock group in the late 1960's.

²⁰⁵ Hampton, a renowned American organist, was organist and choirmaster of Calvary Episcopal Church in New York City from 1963-1983. His "Fridays at Midnight" organ recital series was innovative and well-known throughout Manhattan and among church musicians across the United States.

²⁰⁶ Brief Outline, page 36.

Choir ministry to city care and custodial institutions.”²⁰⁷ Classes in handbells, percussion, recording and electronic techniques, and group improvisation (taught by King) were offered.²⁰⁸ Given a disappointing response, the workshop was dissolved after a year, but the handbells continued as a separate program.²⁰⁹

In April 1983, King hosted “A Weekend of Liturgy and Music” at Trinity, which drew a “...small but appreciative number of church musicians” from as far away as Memphis. King included an open Family Choir rehearsal preparing for one of their Reach Out and Touch programs (to be discussed in the following chapter). Services included the Mass for Peace and anthems by Edgar Bainton and Orlando Lassus. The Sunday morning Eucharist featured King’s *Missa Archangelus*, an anthem by Sowerby, and a motet by Peter Philips.²¹⁰

“A Festival of Sound and Light”

Not only did King create innovative music programs, but he also had creative methods of integrating non-musical and extra-musical elements into concerts and liturgy. This is apparent in his series entitled “A Cosmic Experience: A Festival of Sound and Light” that took place at Trinity in May and June of 1977. The series drew overflow crowds of young people; advertisements and “weekender guide” notices were placed in *The New York Times*, *The Soho Weekly News*, *The Aquarian* and others.²¹¹ Conceived and

²⁰⁷ Brief Outline, page 43.

²⁰⁸ Brief Outline, pages 43-4.

²⁰⁹ Brief Outline, page 44.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

designed by King, the intent of these “shows” was to create a vehicle for meditation. These “experiences” were so elaborate they required a detailed spreadsheet indicating who needed to do what and when.²¹² Setting the stage for the “experience” was the “Chanting of the Evening Prayers:” a Gregorian prayer service of Compline and the Solemn Te Deum from the *Liber Usualis*, sung in Latin by a choir of four men, surrounded by candles and incense. The electronic component then took over where the choir left off. A detailed press release expounded upon the aspect of meditation:

A quadrophonic sound system will then recreate a bridge into an aura/visual extension of prayer in which music will control light projections to totally encompass the participants with beauty and to translate the Gregorian cry of praise into an experience in mediation which is totally contemporary in its cosmic thrust into consciousness-raising.²¹³

King then performed a thirty minute recital of organ music, incorporating quadraphonic electronic tapes, and the music controlled two Kaleidatrons which played lights on the reredos, and a 0.8 Milliwatt Helium Neon Laser.²¹⁴ King created three programs, which he repeated three times for the nine performances. A work by Bach, a contemporary work, and a French composition comprised each of the programs:

Three different musical programs will be presented in cycles incorporating the music of past musical giants and contemporary composers including an organ improvisation modulated through an ARP 2600 synthesizer.²¹⁵

²¹¹ Brief Outline, page 33.

²¹² “Sound and Light Festival Worksheet,” Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Box 855/76.

²¹³ Newspaper article from Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Box 855, Folder: Festival of Sound and Light (Press)

²¹⁴ Brief Outline, page 33.

²¹⁵ Newspaper article from Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, Box 855, Folder: Festival of Sound and Light (Press).

PROGRAM I

Bach – Fantasie in G Major

Bach – Prelude in G Major

Hampton – God Plays Hide and Seek

Alain – Litanies

PROGRAM II

Bach – Toccata & Fugue in D minor

Ronald Perera – Reverberations

Felciano – God of the Expanding Universe (1971) (using synthesizer)

Mulet – Carillon Sortie

PROGRAM III

Bach – Fantasie in G Minor

Felciano – Noösphere II (electronic tape)

Pinkham – Toccata for the Vault of Heaven

Dupré – “Resurrection” from *Symphonie-Passion*²¹⁶

As stated in a press release, King’s hope for these programs was to attract young people with “Dissonant notes. Screeching vibes. Clashing organ music. Flashing lights. Laser beams. Strobes. Quadrophonic sound. Burning incense.”²¹⁷ He appealed to the potential audience with humor: “We are concerned about young people and how to reach them with religion. It was tried at a church in Seattle for those into meditation trips. But

²¹⁶ “Light Show & Bach Featured At NY’s Trinity,” *The Aquarian*, April 20-27, 1977, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Box 855/95, Folder: Festival of Sound and Light (Press).

²¹⁷ “Trinity Hopes ‘Vides’ Attract Young,” Unknown newspaper, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Box 855/ 91, Folder: Festival of Sound and Light (Press).

we have spiffier facilities.”²¹⁸ The “spiffier facilities,” or as another newspaper article termed it, “gaudier facilities,” utilized the Gothic structure to their benefit, aiming the music and lights so it would bounce off the arches, nooks and crannies, stone, and Trinity’s magnificent stained glass windows.²¹⁹ Amusingly, and certainly a sign of the times, one newspaper article concluded: “No smoking, please. Those discovered smoking anything will be politely asked to do such smoking outside the church, says King.”²²⁰

In 1979, a two-year restoration of the interior lighting system at Trinity was completed, which incorporated a recessed lighting system that “highlights the original fixtureless vista and allows one to light the space in various ways and pinpoint the shadows associated with gothic architecture.”²²¹ So, in 1980, King brought back the Sound and Light Shows for two Sunday evening programs at 9 P.M. The shows were similar in nature to the 1977 performances, with a stronger emphasis on the architecture of the church due to the lighting restoration. Each show required no less than four lighting technicians and one sound technician.²²² One lighting technician directed the entire lighting aspect of the shows, utilizing the permanent lighting system, a five-color Kaleidatron which responded to the pitch frequency of the music being performed, slide projections and other special effects. King then incorporated various sounds associated with the active music ministry of the parish: a preludial recital on the historic tower bells,

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ “Trinity Hopes ‘Vibes’ Attract Young.”

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ “Sound and Light” Program, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Box 855/79, and Brief Outline, page 33.

²²² “1980 Sound and Light Program,” Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Box 855/78.

the Aeolian-Skinner organ, unaccompanied flute (representing the noonday concerts), quadraphonic electronic compositions (representing Trinity's – and King's – advocacy of contemporary music), and a hymn accompanied by all acoustic instruments (representing hymns as the primary vehicle of music in the parish). He concluded the programs with Henri Mulet's *Carillon Sortie*, "...long a favorite with the 9 P.M. crowd."²²³

The one hour long programs were as follows, and the performances raised money for the work of St. Barnabas House, a center for homeless adolescents:

The Ringing of the Tower Bells

Toccatas for the Vault of Heaven (1972) for Organ and Tape – Daniel Pinkham

Fantasie (1649) for two flutes – Anonymous

Apparition de l'Eglise eternelle (1934) for organ – Olivier Messiaen

Destiny 21.5 (1936) for flute – Edgard Varese

Te Deum Laudamus (1980) for modulated taped voices and bells – Larry King

Sonatina (1962) for solo flute – Francis Thorne

Three Verses from the Te Deum (1531) for organ – Anonymous

Four (1973) for flute – Alec Wyton

Litanies (1939) for organ – Jehan Alain

MEI (1962) for flute – Kazuo Fukushima

The Throne of Heaven (1980) for Tape and Improvisers – Larry King

Fantasie "Il lamento" (1595) for two flutes – Thomas Morley

Carillon Sortie for organ – Henri Mulet²²⁴

²²³ Brief Outline, page 39.

²²⁴ "1980 Sound and Light Program."

Two of the works were King's creations: his setting of "The Throne of Heaven" and the "Te Deum Laudamus." The former was a mystical mix of modulated voices, synthesized lines, live organ improvisation, at the end of which the congregation joined in singing "Now from the altar of my heart let incense flames arise" to the tune of *Amazing Grace*, fulfilling the hymn portion. The "Te Deum Laudamus" featured modulated voices and bells, with the ancient hymn of praise set to the Solemn Gregorian melody, prerecorded and modulated through the ARP 2600 synthesizer and mixed with panning and delay techniques for quadraphonic playback from the four corners of the church, and embellished by live hand-bell cadences.²²⁵

In August 1982, King organized and presented four concerts on consecutive Sunday evenings at 9 P.M., entitled "Musical Statements for Peace, Nuclear Disarmament and Social Responsibility."²²⁶ Readings, prayers and musical offerings were presented including Alec Wyton and his son Richard performing Claude Bolling's *Suite for Flute and Jazz Piano*, King's 1975 work *The American Dream*, and the Park Avenue Christian Church Dance Network accompanied by David Higgs.²²⁷ On August 15, sixteen voices from the Trinity Choir performed *The Peaceable Kingdom* by Randall Thompson.²²⁸

²²⁵ Brief Outline, page 39.

²²⁶ Brief Outline, page 43

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

“Sunday Evenings on Wall Street”

King saw everything he did within the church as a ministry or an outreach to others, and sought ways to bring Christ to the unchurched, whether the poor and outcast in surrounding New York communities or the Wall Street executives commuting into Manhattan on a daily basis. In August 1984, sixteen years after arriving at Trinity, Larry continued his passion for reaching the former – the poor in the community, often “unchurched” – by developing creative religious programming: from June through September of 1984, “Sunday Evenings on Wall Street” provided “meditative, spiritual experiences through music for the residents of lower Manhattan.”²²⁹ Fifteen minute concerts on the Trinity tower bells opened the “experiences” at 8:45 P.M. Following this at 9:00 P.M. was a meditative reading, Compline, and Te Deum to original music set for four sopranos and hand-bells by King, followed by 30-minute organ meditations.²³⁰ These were later moved to 6:00 P.M. in September in response to requests from parishioners who said they would come (but inevitably did not come) if the programs were earlier.²³¹ The Compline services alternated between being sung in Latin to the traditional Gregorian Tones, and the service from the 1979 Book of Common Prayer sung to Larry King’s contemporary settings. Gregory Eaton, James Simms, Bruce Neswick, David Hurd and King played the organ meditations. King performed five of the meditations throughout this series, and as was typical of his organ programs, each

²²⁹ Publicity material, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Box 865/179, File 1.

²³⁰ Brief Outline, page 47.

²³¹ Ibid.

featured a work for organ and electronic tape by a contemporary composer²³² and one of his own organ compositions.²³³

During August, the 9:00 P.M. services were replaced by “spiritual masterpieces” by twentieth century organ composers.²³⁴ King’s interest in contemporary composers and their music is seen throughout the series. The opening concert featured *Credo*, a work by native Buenos Aires composer and Langlais student, Norberto Guinaldo. It is of little surprise that when King heard the premiere of *Credo* at the 1983 Regional A.G.O. Convention in California he committed to bring it, and Guinaldo, to New York. Not only was *Credo* a new work by a living composer, it served as the composer’s own statement of Christian faith.²³⁵ King himself believed in composing with a purpose beyond putting notes on a page, towards an expression of faith and higher being on the composer’s part that would in turn be communicated to the listener for the nourishment of their soul. Also on the August series was David Hurd, playing his *Te Deum Laudamus* (commissioned by King).²³⁶ Bruce Neswick played Messiaen’s *L’Ascension, Messe de la Pentecôte*, and Jon Gillock played Messiaen’s most recent organ composition, *Méditations sur le Mystère de la Sainte Trinité* (1969).²³⁷ The mission committee of Trinity parish co-sponsored the

²³² Daniel Pinkham’s *Toccatas for the Vault of Heaven* (1972), Richard Felciano’s *God of the Expanding Universe* (1970), and King’s brand new *Revelations of St. John the Divine* (1984).

²³³ Publicity material, , Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Box 865/179, File 1.

²³⁴ Publicity material, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Box 865/179, File 1.

²³⁵ Guinaldo recital program notes, Trinity Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Box 865/179, File 1.

²³⁶ Brief Outline, page 47

²³⁷ Ibid.

events in the hope of drawing new parishioners into Trinity's program from those attending.²³⁸

Premieres and Commissions

King was also incredibly supportive of contemporary composers; while at Trinity he instigated the commission and world premiere of numerous compositions, and hosted the New York, American and world premieres of many works. While King's study with Spelman at Redlands in the 1960's certainly had a significant influence upon his interest in this, King as a composer and innovator himself no doubt impacted his support of other contemporary composers.

One composer whom King worked with several times while at Trinity was Richard Felciano. After enthusiastically received performances of Felciano's *Glossolalia* and *Pentecost Sunday* on Pentecost 1970 and at a Noonday Concert the same month,²³⁹ Alec Wyton commissioned Felciano to write a cycle of three works for organ and tape. King performed the first of these, "God of the Expanding Universe" (1971), multiple times at Trinity in various contexts. Around the same time, Trinity, through the aegis of King, commissioned Felciano to compose three anthems: one for Advent 1 ("Signs"), one for Ascension Day ("Out of Sight") and one for Trinity Sunday ("Three in One").²⁴⁰ In December 1970, *Signs* for chorus, organ, and slide projections, was premiered as the Sequence, requiring three slide projectors, projectionists and massive screens, set up in

²³⁸ Brief Outline, page 47.

²³⁹ "Boos and hisses were anticipated!" Brief Outline, page 12.

²⁴⁰ Brief Outline, page 13.

the old Sanctuary, “somewhat marring the appearance of the building.”²⁴¹ Road signs were projected during the work, and unlike most contemporary works and ideas tried at Trinity, it was met with mixed reception.²⁴² “The congregation found the work “interesting” but was bothered by the unsightly appearance of the screens for the remainder of the service. In later performances, the slides were projected directly onto the reredos, losing some clarity but gaining a new beauty and restoring the normal appearance of the church.”²⁴³

On Trinity Sunday, 1971, Felciano’s Trinity Sunday anthem, *Three in One*, was premiered by the choirs of the Trinity Church and the chapels at the All-Parish service at 10:30 A.M.²⁴⁴ On Easter 1972, Felciano’s *Sic Transit*, scored for voices, organ, tape and “light sources” was performed at the Offertory. Composed for Alec Wyton and the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine in New York City, its premiere there on Easter Sunday 1970, with Marilyn Keiser as organist,²⁴⁵ had shocked the congregation with strobe lights concealed in the flower arrangements, according to King.²⁴⁶ At Trinity, strobe lights were flashed on a darkened reredos, and the result was thought to be very effective.²⁴⁷

²⁴¹ Brief Outline, page 15.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Brief Outline, page 18.

²⁴⁴ Brief Outline, page 17.

²⁴⁵ Marilyn Keiser, e-mail to author, November 1, 2017.

²⁴⁶ Brief Outline, page 20.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

In March 1971, Trinity hosted a major undertaking: the world premiere of Iain Hamilton's (1922-2000) *Epitaph for This World and Time*. The Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine, Trinity Episcopal Church in Princeton, New Jersey, and Trinity Church, New York combined choirs for the performance, scored for three choirs and three organs. Alec Wyton, James Litton, and King each conducted their own choir in different locations around the church, and Jack W. Jones and David Agler each played organ from one of the consoles with Dennis Michno (the Assistant Organist at Trinity Wall Street at the time) playing on a Portatif organ provided by Casavant Frères.²⁴⁸

In December 1976, Trinity's Choir performed the New York premiere of Daniel Pinkham's *Fanfares* for chorus, tenor soloist, organ, brass and timpani as part of its Advent concert on the Noonday Concert Series.²⁴⁹ Given that Pinkham also contributed to the organ and electronic media repertoire, it is not surprising that King supported Pinkham's work as a contemporary composer. Other Pinkham compositions also made their way onto various programs of King's throughout his career.

Works including electronic tape by other composers were also of interest to King. Leslie Bassett's *Collect* for chorus and pre-recorded tape premiered at Trinity on January 31, 1972. King described it as "an especially difficult work for the choir and for the conductor to coordinate with the tape; the text, an anonymous prayer for a way to end violence, is dramatically enhanced by the tape."²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ Brief Outline, page 16.

²⁴⁹ Brief Outline, page 31.

²⁵⁰ Brief Outline, page 19.

As noted previously, Trinity commissioned numerous works during King's tenure, certainly as a result of King's instigation, and can be seen as a legacy of Leslie Spelman's influence on his former pupil while studying at Redlands. Trinity's commissions include David Hurd's anthem "I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life," premiered in April 1978.²⁵¹ Additionally, hymn tunes by Albright, Ned Rorem and Charles Wuorinen were commissioned by Trinity for "Music in the Church...A Long View", a conference co-sponsored by Trinity, The American Cathedral Organists and Choirmasters Association and The Schola Cantorum Ecumenica.²⁵²

One of Trinity's larger commissions was a musical setting by Albright of the Mass according to the translations of the International Consultation on English Texts in April 1974. The new Mass had its World Premiere on Sunday, April 28 as part of "A Festival of Contemporary Music" held at Trinity, organized by King; the work was for congregation, choir, organ and optional instruments.²⁵³ The Festival opened with a recital by Albright of his own *Stipendium Peccati* and *Organbook I* as well as Bolcom's *Hydraulis* and *Black Host*.²⁵⁴ Contemporary choral works were also presented in a concert featuring Rorem's *Three Motets on Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, Hampton's *Alpha and Omega*, Gary L. Nair's *Penitential Mass for Male Voices* and Vittorio Rieti's *Missa Brevis*.²⁵⁵ They also featured a noon Eucharist service of *Missa*

²⁵¹ Letter to Family Choir, March 30, 1978, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Box 852.

²⁵² Brief Outline, page 22.

²⁵³ Brief Outline, page 25.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

Archangelus with Archangel, and Alec Wyton gave an address following a luncheon served after the Eucharist.²⁵⁶ The other concerts included choral works by Igor Stravinsky, Arnold Schoenberg, and Charles Ives.²⁵⁷ The conclusion of the festival featured organ compositions by Gary White, Xavier Darrase, Torsten Nilsson, Robert Cogan, Pompeyo Camps, and Bengt Hambræus.²⁵⁸

As for Albright's new Mass, King was candid in his thoughts on the issues surrounding the work, stating "The new mass provided a major challenge for both the musicians and the congregation, who had been rehearsing their parts following services on three previous Sundays."²⁵⁹ The mass received "varied and contradictory" reviews: "many found the Sanctus ethereal and inspiring while others found it gloomy and forboding [sic]. The Lord's Prayer was thought beautiful by all, but was made complicated by metered rubatos. The Gloria was antiphonal between chorus and congregation, joyful and spirited, and a major counting problem for organist and conductor."²⁶⁰

King played the first performance of his own organ compositions *Soni Sphaerarum* and *Aquarius II* following the noonday Eucharist on July 17, 1974, describing these works as "efforts towards bridging the gap between the "crunch" of Avant-Garde, and the simple romanticism of most popular music."²⁶¹ This rub, or

²⁵⁶ Brief Outline, page 25.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Brief Outline, page 26.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

“crunch” to which King refers, could be described as the difference between that which immediately pleases the ear of the listener (the simple romanticism of popular music) and that which requires a bit more astute listening to appreciate and understand (the avant-garde).

Although composed for the choir of St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Rorem’s “Praises to the Nativity” received its first performance by the Trinity Choir at a Noonday Concert in December 1972. The Cathedral had found the work too difficult but the Trinity Choir performed it with Mr. Rorem attending the final rehearsal and concert. At the rehearsal, Rorem insisted his tempo be observed, despite King’s strong opinion that it was “too fast for the room.” King followed Rorem’s tempo at the concert since he was present, and the response was “lukewarm” from the audience, and the clergy advised King not to repeat it as scheduled on Christmas Eve. King, however, assured the clergy that it would be well received at *his* tempo.²⁶²

Trinity’s support of the anti-Vietnam War movement prompted an all-day “Musical Witness for Peace and Unity” in April 1971. The highlight of this event was Leopold Stokowski conducting the American Symphony Orchestra in a performance of the conclusion of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, with a massed chorus, including the choirs of Trinity Church, Calvary Church and St. Michael’s Churches, and Union Theological Seminary.²⁶³

²⁶¹ Brief Outline, page 26.

²⁶² Brief Outline, page 21.

²⁶³ Brief Outline, page 16.



FIGURE 3.6. King greets Stokowski as he arrives at Trinity for the Musical Witness for Peace and Unity in April 1971.

Source: Trinity Church Wall Street Archives

Noteworthy Capstone Services at Trinity

Two services, at opposite ends of King's tenure at Trinity, reflect his skilled innovation. Both services stand as markers of his work, not only at Trinity, but of his entire career, and both happen to be installation services for different Trinity clergy.

The first and earlier service: On January 26, 1972, Robert Ray Parks was installed as Trinity's fifteenth rector.²⁶⁴ As he had promised, Dr. Butler, who hired King in 1968, retired in 1972 after a short tenure, leaving Dr. Parks to implement the document entitled "One Peppercorn."²⁶⁵ A main part of the "One Peppercorn" transformation was aimed at leading Trinity into "a new, forward-looking-day," and as such, King sought to bring this concept into Dr. Park's installation service: King suggested using Felciano's *Noösphere II* (1967) for electronic tape as the "music" for the entrance procession.²⁶⁶ Dr. Parks consented, even though both he and King knew that the Archbishop of Canterbury would be in attendance.²⁶⁷ King recalled that "The Rt. Rev. Stephen Bayne, processing directly behind the Vicar, was reported to have loudly whispered "Don, they've just blown up the stock exchange!"²⁶⁸ Despite the uniqueness and oddity of including such a work at such a grand occasion, King never ceased to be able to pull such music off successfully,

²⁶⁴ Brief Outline, page 16.

²⁶⁵ "Rector's Office," <https://www.trinitywallstreet.org/about/archives/rectors-office>, accessed March 1, 2016.

²⁶⁶ Felciano's description of the work: "The acoustical equivalent of looking down the center of a spiral — a slow rotation in which every sound, once introduced is perpetually present until eroded by others. As we lose our sense of time, our sense of space grows. The title is from Teilhard de Chardin's idea of a globe-encircling membrane of expanded consciousness." <http://www.richardfelciano.com/completesoloworks.html>

²⁶⁷ Brief Outline, page 19.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

generally eliciting positive responses from those in attendance. Dr. Parks remembered it as a “...great processional piece...” while also recollecting that:

...just as I arrived at the Chancel steps standing all alone there and one of the assembled multitude, I felt the organ stuck, a note began to hold and went on and on and on and it began to filter through my mind - well I guess if push came to shove as rector of the parish maybe no one knows what to do. Well I was just about to climb the steps and say hold it, cut off the organ and we'll proceed without it, I had to do something. About that time the organ picked up and went on and I'm sure that note was held a good minute, and if you ask me do I ever hold anything against Larry King, I hold it against him for not warning me that that was going to happen. But I acknowledge that the fact that he had assumed that I was so knowledgeable of good music that I would be perfectly aware of this piece of music and would know it was coming anyway.²⁶⁹

Dr. Parks described the music at that service as “outstanding” and notes that the service immediately impressed upon him that “King was a superb organist and [I] also ended up discovering that he was the finest organist and choirmaster that I ever dealt with in my whole ministry.”²⁷⁰

The second and later service: The Rev. Canon Lloyd Casson was installed as Trinity's new Vicar in September 1988. With the exception of a few concert series such as “Praise the Lord with a Groovy Sound,” King's programming was rarely exclusively all avant-garde or all traditional. King frequently and masterfully wove the two together, often at very significant services. If any service at Trinity under King's musical leadership epitomized this ability, it was this one, very late in his tenure at Trinity.²⁷¹ Canon Casson was inducted by the Rector on Trinity Sunday, but instituted by the Bishop

²⁶⁹ Dr. Parks, Oral History Interview, page 119, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y. Rector's File.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Brief Outline, page 53.

of New York at this September service. Without time limitations, the music of the service was planned to reflect the broad tastes of Casson. The Choir of Trinity Church sang Sir Hubert Parry's *I Was Glad* as the procession entered the church and Hurd's *Alleluia* was sung as a response to the Gospel. The Family Choir sang J.C. White's contemporary gospel-style *One More Day* at the Offertory, with King leading the choir from the Oberheim synthesized piano and Simms playing a synthesized bass-line on the Yamaha DX7, and Catherine Burrell "warming the sound" with the celestes from all divisions of the organ and soloist Thomas Moore using a microphone – the congregation applauded the effort. At Communion, the Trinity Choir gave the first American performance of an anthem set by William Mathias to a text by Dame Julian of Norwich entitled *As surely as God is our Father so also is He our Mother*, which reflected Canon Casson's concerns as chair of the Episcopal Church's Committee on Liturgical Texts.²⁷²

Beyond these numerous examples, King's creativity, innovation and the use of "contemporary" is most aptly represented by the Family Choir. Of the two choirs in existence during King's tenure at Trinity, the Choir of Trinity Church certainly is most representative of traditional music, and the Family Choir without question is most representative of King's contemporary and innovative side. Due to the significance and volume of information pertinent to the Family Choir, it is addressed on its own in the following chapter.

²⁷² Brief Outline, page 53.

Chapter 4: THE FAMILY CHOIR OF TRINITY CHURCH

If one were to single out a specific element from Larry King's work at Trinity that epitomizes his life vision and entire career, it would undoubtedly be the Family Choir. Organized by King in March 1977 as an experiment, the Family Choir came on the heels of another of King's musical endeavors at Trinity.²⁷³ In the fall of 1970, King had organized The Wall Street Choral Society to "allow musical people who worked in Wall Street to actively participate in the parish program." Rehearsals were held immediately after a workday, from 5:10 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. on Wednesday evenings and they performed two annual concerts in May and December, continuing through 1976. The Society performed classic traditional choral works, including Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem*, Antonio Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Vesprae Solennes de Confessore*, Franz Haydn's *Nelson Mass*, Marc-Antoine Charpentier's *Messe De Minuit*, and Felix Mendelssohn's *Hear My Prayer*, among others.²⁷⁴

Unfortunately, just as King noted that the Choral Society was "reaching expectations musically and numerically," New York City waged a campaign to minimize the rush-hour congestion on public transport by staggering working hours.²⁷⁵ This, combined with the "demise of a creative noonday ministry," which was the major recruiting ground at Trinity for the Choral Society, took a toll on participation, and the

²⁷³ Letter to Family Choir, undated, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, F.C. Correspondence 1977, 1978.

²⁷⁴ Brief Outline, page 14.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

Choral Society was given a sabbatical in spring of 1977.²⁷⁶ In his letter informing the members of the Choral Society of this development, King invited the singers to become a part of what would be King's greatest legacy at Trinity.²⁷⁷

Simultaneous to this demise of the Choral Society (it was never revived again), King was working to establish a parish choir. A feasibility study within Trinity Parish towards this endeavor was initiated by King in January 1977, asking such questions as how many times to sing a month, level requirements, abilities and experience, possible rehearsal times, and level of strictness.²⁷⁸ The Family Choir of Trinity Parish was officially organized soon thereafter, and the first rehearsal took place on March 2, 1977.²⁷⁹

The Family Choir's purpose, according to King, was to encourage active involvement by those in the congregation and community who could not commit to the Trinity Choir's rigorous schedule, or those that did not meet the notation-reading requirements of that choir.²⁸⁰ King noted that since most New York City churches rely on professional choirs, there was a need for a volunteer choir in which the many good singers that move to New York City each year would have an opportunity to sing as they did in their hometown church choirs.²⁸¹ King desired that all people within the

²⁷⁶ Brief Outline, page 14.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Brief Outline, Additions Section.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ 1980-81 Choral Music Brochure, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 507.

²⁸¹ Family Choir Press Release, undated, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 852/2, 64.

congregation, and even the community, be included and able to find their niche within Trinity's music program. This was the most extraordinarily unique aspect of the Family Choir: the wide range of diversity in the membership. “

The Family Choir of Trinity Parish is not only an opportunity for all members of a family aged nine and up to sing and participate in parish ministry together, but an opportunity for all people who love to sing to become part of a larger family of members and friends of Trinity Parish who share their talents within and without these historic walls.²⁸²

The choir was open to anyone nine years of age or older; indeed, of the 13 Goals and Objectives of The Family Choir of Trinity Parish, number four was, “To enable people of a wide age span to become an enlarged and caring family through their common love for God and music.”²⁸³ A press release stated that the choir sought to “become an inter-racial enlarged family of youngsters, singles, parents and grandparents,”²⁸⁴ and a quick glance at a photo of the choir from any year illustrates this. There were many singers from the West Indies as well as children. Elaine Brown, one of King's choral conducting professors at Union Theological Seminary, likely was an inspiration for King's start of the Family Choir; Brown's “pastoral passion” led to her vision of bringing together singers throughout the city of Philadelphia.²⁸⁵

Outreach to the younger people of Trinity was intentional and King actively recruited children for the Family Choir, seeking roll lists of children within the church

²⁸² Family Choir News Release, undated, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 852: F.C. News Releases and Articles.

²⁸³ Family Choir Pamphlet, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 495.

²⁸⁴ Family Choir News Release, undated, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 852: F.C. News Releases and Articles.

²⁸⁵ John Walker.

with which to recruit young members.²⁸⁶ The importance placed on having children in the choir was based on two things. Firstly, it was based on the impact that young people in the choir had on the youth for which they sang at The Spofford Detention Center for Adolescents (to be addressed later in this document).²⁸⁷ Secondly, the importance was based on the benefit of having family units as a part of the choir (mother and daughter, father and son, grandparents and grandchildren, etc.).²⁸⁸ King also recognized the “quick musical ears and alert minds” of the younger singers, noting that that enables them “to be equal if not surpass the efforts of the older members, and that they respond positively to being treated like adults.”²⁸⁹

King sought out the young people himself, surprisingly appealing to the age old assumption that they would be interested in more current music and less “traditional” music:

4 August 1985

To the young people of Trinity Parish.....

Hi!

The Family Choir of your church is a lot more than you would guess by seeing and hearing it once a month at services, when we sing “classical” anthems. This is just a small part of a program which is great fun for young people—just ask Ben, Babatu, Marc, Tony or Romana!

²⁸⁶ Recruitment Lists, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 853, 41&43. F.C. Membership Possibilities.

²⁸⁷ Recruitment Letter for Family Choir, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 853/39: F.C. Membership Possibilities.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Press Release for Family Choir, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 852/2, 63: F.C. News Releases.

This fall we will be going to the Spofford Juvenile Detention Center and the Riker's Island Adolescent Center to attempt to bring some hope into the lives of the kids there who have had really bad luck. At these programs we sing a lively type of "pop" religious music, with taped accompaniments with synthesizer and drum machines.

All year long we work on our June SHOWTIME, -which is pretty nuts, but a lot of fun. The young break-dancers stole the show last year with their versions of songs by the New Edition.

Each Wednesday night rehearsal (from 6 to 7:20 p.m.) begins with 15 minutes of movement—you can choose (1) break-dancing, (2) chorus line, or (3) "dance prayer."

If YOU would be interested in becoming a part of this crazy family, talk to me soon, or speak to Jim Simms. One or the other of us is here on Sunday, and we can be reached by phone during the week at (212_602-0876.

The choir list is filling up fast for next season, and I'd sure like to have some of you on that list. Think about it, and talk to us!

Best wishes,
Larry King
Music Director and Organist



Figure 4.1. The Family Choir in the late 1980's.
Rev. Daniel Paul Matthews is on the far left, and Larry King is on the far right.
Source: Trinity Church Wall Street Archives

King did not require previous vocal experience to sing in the Family Choir, but members needed to “demonstrate a good musical ear in a voice-placement interview with the director,” and they needed to “be placed in their appropriate sections without upsetting the musical balance of sopranos, altos, tenors and basses.”²⁹⁰ Regardless of ability, however, one can only surmise the graciousness with which King handled any vocal interview; it is unlikely he ever turned someone completely away unless they were truly tone deaf, but rather provided them with an opportunity to improve their skills.²⁹¹ Classes in reading music were offered by the Trinity musicians for those needed to learn or improve this skill,²⁹² and at one rehearsal each month King employed vocal coaches to either teach the notes or to help them with vocal problems and sound production.²⁹³

At one Sunday service each month the Family Choir sang an anthem, leading the congregation from the pews on the other Sundays. King described this arrangement as “...the beginning of a complete transformation of congregational singing in a building not conducive to group singing, as a proportionately large group of rehearsed parishioners begin singing leadership in the middle of the congregation.”²⁹⁴ Having a large choir of fifty-plus members spread throughout the congregation did wonders for congregational song at Trinity.

²⁹⁰ 1980-81 Choral Music Brochure, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 50.

²⁹¹ Lorraine LaHuta, interview by author, February 6, 2016, via telephone.

²⁹² 1979-80 Choral Music Brochure, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 50.

²⁹³ Letter to Family Choir Vocal Coaches, dated August 8, 1987, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 537.

²⁹⁴ Brief Outline, 32.

In addition to one Sunday service each month, the Family Choir sang for special programs throughout the year, occasionally joined the Trinity Choir, and played a major role in the Feast of Lights (to be discussed later in this chapter).²⁹⁵ Rehearsals only lasted one and a half hours in length (6:00-7:30 P.M. on Wednesdays); the first forty-five minutes included training in musicianship and vocal production, plus a review of Sunday service music; the last forty-five minutes was devoted to rehearsing anthems.

Because of the popularity and high membership numbers in the choir, it was common for King to enforce strict rules regarding absences; folders were often in “high demand!”²⁹⁶ Membership in the choir consistently numbered around sixty on the roster, and at times over seventy.²⁹⁷ In any given year there were typically over twenty sopranos, and ten to fifteen each of the altos, tenors and basses. Despite the popularity and good membership numbers, King still fought low and inconsistent attendance as do most directors. In Fall 1987, late in King’s tenure at Trinity, he remarked: “...[I am facing] a severe case of depression over the high absence rate at rehearsals....Will you PLEASE cheer me up at next Wednesday’s rehearsal?”²⁹⁸

King included many caveats through the years regarding rehearsal attendance; everything from the traditional and broad, “it is expected at all rehearsals and

²⁹⁵ 1979-80 Choral Music Brochure.

²⁹⁶ Letter to Family Choir, dated September 12, 1985, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 548.

²⁹⁷ Letter to Family Choir, dated September 17, 1987, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 532.

²⁹⁸ Letter to Family Choir, dated October 22, 1987, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 531.

performances as is notification of absences,”²⁹⁹ to the more specific stipulation of attending at least three out of four rehearsals prior to the singing of a Sunday anthem, or simply requiring attendance at the final Wednesday rehearsal prior to singing on Sunday³⁰⁰ and at the monthly vocal coach session with vocal coaches, during Wednesday rehearsal time, in order to sing the upcoming service.³⁰¹

Perhaps most notable amidst King’s work with the Family Choir was his ability to direct a parish choir program in a gracious and loving way amidst the challenges inherent in a church music ministry. This ability to draw people together while lifting singers to a higher standard was a great skill of King’s, as reflected in his rousing explanation as to why rules were even necessary, located preceding the formal written choir rules:

WHY HAVE RULES?

Any person leading the public worship of God has the power either to improve or to disable the effect of a service! This is especially true in the leadership of music, since 20th century human beings are seriously addicted to music, and conditioned to the professional performance standards they hear on radio, television, recordings and films. Gone are the days when churches can grow or even survive with bad musical performance!

The high ceilings of Trinity Church make it very difficult to for a singer to hear the other singers; you depend on those on either side of you. If they don’t know their music, the team-chain is broken, and you’re all in trouble!

Rules, then, have to be set forth and followed for the protection of both the worshipping public and the choir members who make sacrificial efforts to learn to blend with each other and to learn their notes and rhythms.³⁰²

²⁹⁹ 1978-79 Choral Music Brochure, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 498.

³⁰⁰ 1978-79 Family Choir Brochure & 1987-88 Family Choir Season Schedule, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, Folder 850, 535 & 609.

³⁰¹ Letter to Family Choir, dated September 22, 1983, Trinity Church Wall Street, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 582.

Not only was King remarkably successful at maintaining high standards within the context of a volunteer community and choir, but he was masterful at combining both traditional choral repertoire and those works for which the ink had barely dried. King had great appreciation for all repertoire and had the incredible ability to direct, rehearse, and perform it all. A look at the Family Choir's repertoire list from any given year indicates this. The Family Choir's repertoire for the first full season, 1977-1978 follows here (occasionally they would join with the professional Trinity Choir, and those anthems are marked with an asterisk):³⁰³

To God be thanks and praise – Johann Sebastian Bach

Jubilate Deo in C – Benjamin Britten

*Hymn to the Universe (for tape and voices) – Richard Felciano

*Hallelujah (*Messiah*) – George F. Handel

Cantate Domino – Hans Leo Hassler

I am the way, the truth and the life – David J. Hurd, Jr.

You must love your neighbor as yourself – Larry King

Ave verum corpus & De profundis – Wolfgang A. Mozart

*Magnificat for Double Chorus & Sicut cervus – Giovanni P. da Palestrina

*Christmas Cantata & *Fanfares – Daniel Pinkham

*In the beginning of creation (for tape and voices) – Daniel Pinkham

³⁰² Goals and Objectives of the Family Choir, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 852: R.C. Goals and Objectives.

³⁰³ 1977-78 Trinity Music Brochure, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 852: F.C. Brochure Material.

*Te Deum in D – Henry Purcell

Salvation is Created – P. Tschesnokoff

Repertoire for the Family Choir's second full year, 1978-79, included the following:³⁰⁴

To God be thanks and praise – Johann Sebastian Bach

Is any afflicted? – William Billings

O be joyful in the Lord all ye lands³⁰⁵ – Benjamin Britten

Deep in my heart I bear my Lord – Pablo Casals

Cosmic Festival (1972) – Richard Felciano

He forsook the glorious heavens – Orlando Gibbons

Be joyful in the Lord (1977) – Eugene W. Hancock

Go ye therefore (1975) – Gerre Hancock

Hallelujah (*Messiah*) – George Frederic Handel

Cantate Domino – Hans Leo Hassler

Easter Antiphon (1975) – David J. Hurd, Jr.

I am the way (1978)

I know not where the road will lead (1975)

The record of John (1975)

O gladsome light (1978) – Larry King

Sicut cervus – Giovanni P. da Palestrina

Behold, how good and how pleasant (1967) – Daniel Pinkham

In the beginning of creation (for tape and voices) – Daniel Pinkham

³⁰⁴ 1978-79 Family Choir Brochure, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 498.

³⁰⁵ As noted in the brochure repertoire list, but also known as Jubilate Deo in C which was performed the previous year as well.

Te Deum in D – Henry Purcell

Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets – Henry Purcell

Verily, verily I say unto you – Thomas Tallis

Repertoire from one of the final choir seasons, 1987-88 is as follows:

September 13 – Calvin Hampton, A Song to the Lamb

J. C. White, Thank you Lord for One More Day

October 4 – Sowerby, Jubilate Deo in C

November 8 – Stephen Sturk, Praise ye the Lord

November 26, Thanksgiving Day Service – Bach, Now thank we all our God

December 13 – Felix Mendelssohn, How lovely are the messengers

Jeffrey Rickard, Come, thou long expected Jesus

January 9 & 10 – Feast of Lights

February 28 – Shaw/Parker, What wondrous love is this, O my soul

April 2 (Saturday) – Easter Vigil with Trinity Choir

Alec Wyton, Carol of the Exodus

Daniel Pinkham, Now is the hour of darkness past

April 3 – Easter Sunday

David Hurd, Easter Antiphon

Daniel Pinkham, Now is the hour of darkness past

Handel, Hallelujah (Messiah)

May 1 – King, Let us love in deed and truth

June 5 – Henry Purcell, Te Deum in D

Lee Hoiby, The Lord is King

Calvin Hampton, A Repeating Alleluia³⁰⁶

Despite the outreach to younger generations and assumption of interest in “contemporary” music, choir members surveyed by King were not necessarily drawn to the choir for any aspect of contemporary, folk, or pop music. Of twenty-five surveys returned, over half responded that they actually *disliked* contemporary, folk and/or pop music, and only about ten indicated that they liked one of those styles of music.³⁰⁷ The choir definitely appreciated the traditional: they requested to sing again the Britten “Jubilate” and Charles Stanford’s “Te Deum,” in addition to King’s own “The Transfiguration” containing a “wild tape part that has caused it to be nicknamed ‘The Bubble Anthem.’”³⁰⁸

King recognized the value of impressing upon volunteer choirs the significance of their own voice as a recruiter and spokesperson for the choir and continually impressed this upon the members of the Family Choir. Early on he instructed them: “YOU ARE THE BEST WITNESSES TO THE VALUES OF THE FAMILY CHOIR EXPERIENCE, and I appoint each and every one of you as an official recruiter.”³⁰⁹ Apparently his party line was “...take a seat in church in front of someone who looks as if they’re a born singer; if they make a decent sound, charm them into letting you

³⁰⁶ 1987-88 Family Choir Season Schedule, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850/535-6.

³⁰⁷ Family Choir Feasibility Survey, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 853, 10.

³⁰⁸ Letter to Family Choir, dated June 7, 1986, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 542.

³⁰⁹ Letter to Family Choir, dated August 5, 1978, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 852: F.C. Correspondence 1977, 1978.

introduce them to me, and they will have passed their interview before they know what's happened."³¹⁰

The Family Choir did not typically sing for the Christmas Eve services at Trinity, instead putting their efforts in December towards preparation for the Feast of Lights which took place in January. However, at times there was desire from some clergy for them to lead the Christmas Eve services.³¹¹ One of the Family Choir's early participations at Trinity was leading the inaugural Easter Vigil service in 1977,³¹² singing Hassler's *Cantate Domino* and a chant-like version of *The Song of Moses*.³¹³

Beginning in 1978, the Family Choir started each choir year with a camp weekend at the Trinity Parish Camp and Conference Center in West Cornwall, Connecticut. Family members joined the singers and a chartered bus drove them to the camp. The choir enjoyed free time and vocal sessions, full choir rehearsals and evening prayer...³¹⁴ The intent was to "...grow together into the enlarged Christian family..." as voted on as a high priority on their list of purposes, but also to have focused time to work on music for the upcoming season.³¹⁵ The choir seemed to truly enjoy their work together here, but apparently the accommodations at the camp left something to be desired: on King's survey after one year's retreat, responses to "Would you attend another weekend with the

³¹⁰ Letter to Family Choir, dated August 5, 1978.

³¹¹ Letter to Family Choir, dated Thanksgiving Day, 1978, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 852: Family Choir Correspondence 1977, 1978.

³¹² Brief Outline, 32.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ 1979 Trinity Choir Weekend Schedule, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 608: Family Choir Correspondence and Letter to Family Choir, dated August 5, 1978.

³¹⁵ Letter to Family Choir, dated August 5, 1978.

same accommodations?” included, “No more ‘Boy Scout’ accommodations, PLEASE!” And to the question, “Would you attend another weekend with ‘lesser’ accommodations?” the responses varied between “HELL NO!” and “GOD, No!”³¹⁶

Reach Out and Touch Ministry

One of the extraordinarily unique aspects to the Family Choir was another of King’s ideas: the Reach Out and Touch Ministry. King’s desire for this ministry was “to express Christian ministry by singing for those who are institutionalized,” and was certainly a part of King’s original plan when organizing the Family Choir.³¹⁷ Named for the 1970 Nikolas Ashford and Valerie Simpson song, “Reach Out and Touch (Somebody’s Hand),” made popular by Diana Ross,³¹⁸ this Family Choir program ministered to those in prison, the hospital, and nursing homes.³¹⁹ The choir had two mottos for the ministry, one of which was from the previously mentioned Motown hit, “Reach out and touch somebody’s hand, make this world a better place if you can,” and the second was Jesus’ own words, “When you did it to these my brothers, you were doing it to me.”³²⁰

³¹⁶ Family Choir Retreat 1983 Survey, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 70: F.C. Retreat ‘83 Survey.

³¹⁷ Family Choir Pamphlet, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 495.

³¹⁸ First recorded and made popular by Motown singer Diana Ross, the song was recorded in 1969 and released in 1970.

³¹⁹ “What is a Family Choir?” News Release, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 852: F.C. News Releases and Articles.

³²⁰ 1979-80 Family Choir Brochure, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 499.

Immediately after the choir's organization, in the spring of 1977, the Family Choir began the Reach Out and Touch ministry, presenting a religious musical service to the inmates of the House of Women's Detention at the New York City prison on Riker's Island.³²¹

[This first] experience proved to be so highly rewarding for both the choir and audience that the Family Choir unanimously adopted a program of four visitations a year to local institutions which care for the terminally-confined aged, homeless youngsters, the mentally disturbed, and those imprisoned.³²²

King's pastoral nature and interest in including children in all aspects of music ministry, well-illustrated by his broader work at Trinity Parish, is also demonstrated by the second location which the Reach Out and Touch ministry visited: the Spofford Juvenile Detention Center in the Bronx. As previously mentioned, the participation of children in the Family Choir helped to strengthen this ministry as they reached out to the young people abandoned and accused of crime at Spofford.³²³ Visits to Spofford topped King's priority list for the Family Choir, and this ministry to children in particular was a love of King's. King saved numerous newspaper articles in his files on Spofford, indicating his interest in this issue. In writing to the Chaplain at Spofford following one of their visits in 1987, King remarked: "...service to Spofford has been at the very top of my personal agenda for the choir...".³²⁴ The choir enthusiastically sang at Spofford up to

³²¹ 1978-79 Family Choir Brochure, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 497 and Brief Outline, 32.

³²² 1978-79 Family Choir Brochure.

³²³ Letter to Family Choir, dated July 12, 1988, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 527.

³²⁴ Letter to Chaplain Buchannan, dated June 5, 1987, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 853, 107.

five times a year, including an occasional concert at the Chaplain's invitation.³²⁵ In June 1988, the Family Choir answered a request from the Spofford Chaplain to present a concert to the full center population in two shifts. By selecting current popular music, which projected strong moral messages, King discovered that "new soloists were born," and the choir felt they had communicated more of the gospel message to more of the youngsters at Spofford than in all their previous "church service" programs sung there before, and King resolved to continue this new approach.³²⁶

Beginning in December 1978, the Reach Out and Touch program also ministered to the Morningside House at the Bird S. Coler Memorial Hospital on Roosevelt Island in New York, presenting an annual Christmas Program, which continued through at least December 1986.³²⁷ The program was a Christmas Lessons and Carols service: the choir singing Christmas carols interspersed with Scripture readings of the Nativity story.³²⁸

An additional location that the Family Choir visited for the Reach Out and Touch ministry, though with less frequency, was the New York Foundling Hospital. Visitations

³²⁵ Letter to Family Choir, dated August 7, 1987, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 533.

³²⁶ Brief Outline, 53.

³²⁷ Thanksgiving Week, 1986, Letter to Family Choir, Folder 850, 540; Letter to Family Choir, dated November 24, 1985, Folder 850, 553; Letter from Chaplain Chapin to Family Choir, dated December 27, 1984, Folder 850, 563. Letter to Father Gusweller, dated March 27, 1980, Folder 850, 605. Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y.,

³²⁸ Order of Music and Readings for Coler Christmas Program, December 14, 1980, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 890.

occurred on Sunday, May 31, 1981³²⁹ and a later visit on a Wednesday evening in place of choir rehearsal (April 20, 1983).³³⁰

On the Sundays on which the choir was scheduled to visit and sing at an institution they met at Trinity following the Sunday service and left via chartered bus.³³¹ The visits were thoroughly planned and choreographed by King with James Simms's assistance. Musical accompaniment was most often synthesizer, electric bass, and piano. Equipment required for these concerts was significant. For this one Spofford visitation in particular, King transported the following: ARP Omni Keyboard, Tuning Key, Peavey Amplifier & Speaker, Electrovoice mike with connections to Peavey Amp, microphone stand, heavy duty power extension cord accepting 3-prong plugs, a minimum of 3 phone-to-phone connectors, wide masking tape, handbells, TEAC mixer and appropriate connections for the bass, Omni and microphone to operate through the mixer to the Peavey Amp.³³²

As with any choir or service King was planning, King was intentional about the music selected for the Reach Out and Touch programs, devising them to include standard repertoire and music which especially related to the given audience. Members of the

³²⁹ Letter to Family Choir, dated April 20, 1981, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 558.

³³⁰ Letter to Family Choir, dated April 7, 1983, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 586.

³³¹ 1978-79 Family Choir Brochure, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 497.

³³² Reach Out and Touch Program, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 854, 6.

choir volunteered for various solo roles and to read Scripture passages between songs.³³³

King wrote to the Family Choir in 1987, saying:

I've been giving a lot of thought to the content of our programs for the Sunday services at Spofford. Kids listen to the words, and therefore they are even more important than the music. How many of us could wake up in a detention center and say "thank you Lord for one more day"?³³⁴ That's not to say we can't sing it, but it needs to be prefaced—in words they understand—so it CAN apply to them. Some of YOU wrote the best Lenten devotionals which were published by the pastoral committee in the past two years. I need your help both in finding the right music and writing the best narrative which will bring meaning to the lyrics to these kids. So, listen to your radios with these thoughts in mind, and be thinking of the things we should say to these kids that will give them the hope and strength of the Gospel.³³⁵

Repertoire for the Reach Out and Touch programs came from varying sources; King typically chose a mix of early American hymns, Gospel, pop, and traditional church repertoire. Even Barry Manilow was used: King requested permission from Manilow's music publisher to arrange Manilow's "One Voice" for the programs.³³⁶ The program from a Spofford Detention Center visitation on May 9, 1982 is an example of a typical program. Interspersed with the music were some Lessons and a Homily. (Included after each piece are the instruments used to accompany the song.)

One More Day – J. C. White, Contemporary Gospel Song (Electric Bass, Piano, Omni)

³³³ 1978-79 Family Choir Brochure, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 497 and Brief Outline, 32.

³³⁴ "Thank You Lord for One More Day," a favorite anthem of the Family Choir by J. C. White, 1987-88 Family Choir Season Schedule, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 535.

³³⁵ Letter to Family Choir, dated August 7, 1987, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 533.

³³⁶ Letter to Kamakazi Music Corp. from Larry King, dated August 1, 1980, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: Family Choir.

Earth and All Stars (Omni, Piano)

The King's Highway (David Hurd) (Bass, Piano, Omni)

Amazing Grace (Omni, Piano)

Lord, I Want to Be a Christian (unaccompanied)

O Master Let Me Walk With You (Hampton: DeTar tune) (Bass, Omni, Piano,
Drums)

This Little Light of Mine (unaccompanied)

Take My Hand, Precious Lord – Dorsey (Piano, Omni, Bass)

The Lord's Prayer – Anne Phillips (Bass, Piano, Omni)

We are Climbing Jacob's Ladder (Omni)

Reach Out and Touch – Ashford & Simpson (Bass, Piano, Omni, Drums)³³⁷

The following was the program for a Spofford Detention Center visitation on October 28,
1984.³³⁸ These pieces alternated with readings and an opening and conclusion by King.

Hallelujah Amen – Handel

We Are Part of a Family – King

Child Is Born

If Not Us, Then Who – Sheldon Curry

I Want To Walk With Jesus – Solo

Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen

Take My Hand, Precious Lord – Solo

³³⁷ Reach Out and Touch Program, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 854, 6.

³³⁸ Spofford Visitation Program, October 28, 1984, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., 853, 5.

One More Day – J. C. White

Amazing Grace

Reach Out and Touch – Ashford & Simpson

Over the years the programs became less service-like and more concert-like, as seen from the programs listed above. King began seeing how the people, particularly at Spofford, were more able to understand and be touched by the down-to-earth concert program type. In the summer of 1988 King wrote the Family Choir a lengthy letter including a bit about this, saying:

Those of you who participated in the concert at Spofford on June 3 agreed that it was our finest hour of “Reaching out and touching.” More of those kids had their spirits lifted, and hopefully their hearts and minds mellowed, than in all of our “religious services” there put together. We returned exhausted, but exhilarated, and were still flying high the next morning. It was a consensus that the concert concept should be our direction for the future, and Chaplain Buchannan has enthusiastically agreed, and given us two dates for the next season.³³⁹

Another Spofford program from April 16, 1987 shows even more use of contemporary songs:

We Are Part of a Family – Choir

That’s What Friends Are For

It’s a Hard Knock Life

There’s a Place for Us – Somewhere

Great Day

The Greatest Love of All

³³⁹ Larry King letter to Family Choir, dated July 12, 1988, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: 854, 34.

Stand By Me

Reach Out and Touch – Ashford & Simpson

I Wanna Dance with Somebody³⁴⁰

Once or twice a year the Family Choir gave a concert at Trinity of the music they sang at their visitations. On November 24, 1985, Family Choir presented a concert at Trinity of the music it had sung at Spofford Juvenile Detention Center as a benefit for USA for Africa and the Presiding Bishop's Fund for victims of the Mexican earthquake and Puerto Rican floods which had recently brought devastation to those lands.³⁴¹

We are part of a family – King

We are the world

If not us, then who? – Sheldon Curry

One more day – J. C. White

Lord, speak to me

And this is love – duet

You are sure to win

In everything give him thanks

Hallelujah Chorus (*Messiah*) – Handel

Reach Out and Touch³⁴²

³⁴⁰ Spofford Program, April 16, 1987, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Spofford Folder: 853, 113.

³⁴¹ Brief Outline, 49.

³⁴² November 24 Benefit Concert Program, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: Family Choir R.O.&T. 1985-1986, 852, 2. The program is listed exactly as was printed in the concert program, some works with composer and some unidentified.

The Family Choir also joined with the professional Trinity Choir for an occasional concert, typically at least one annually. In their first year, on December 4, 1977, the two choirs performed a concert of Daniel Pinkham's works with the composer conducting, accompanied by double brass quartet and percussion.³⁴³ The following year the program was as follows:³⁴⁴

I: Music for Choir, Instruments and Congregation

Salve Festa Dies	Larry King
Festival Mass	Larry King
Hymn	

II: Music of the Renaissance

Magnificat for Double Chorus	Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina
Cantate Domino	Hans Leo Hassler
Tibi Laus	Peter Philips
Dum Complerentur	Tomás Luis de Victoria

III (*Untitled*)

Te Deum Laudamus	Henry Purcell
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IV: Music of David J. Hurd, Jr.

Easter Fanfare
Hymn: I sing as I arise today
I am the way
Easter Antiphon

In a letter to the Family Choir, King illustrates his remarkable interest in continually evaluating, and then potentially changing something, for the betterment of his work. In this instance King remarks on how the choir performs better while singing from

³⁴³ Letter to Family Choir, undated, Folder: F.C. Correspondence 1977 & 1978, 852 and Family Choir Press Release, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: F.C. News Releases and Articles, 852.

³⁴⁴ Family Choir Concert Program, June 1978, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: F.C. Brochure Material, 852.

memory, and so, after eleven years of directing the Family Choir, King still sought and was open to an opportunity to improve what they are doing:

One of those things that makes this choir magical is the mix of those who read music very well, and those who don't read music at all. The problem is to keep those who do read from becoming bored. Several new approaches will be tried in the coming season. First we all have learned that we sing **much, much better** from memory, so my goal is that we sing everything from memory next season. That will be a challenge to those who read music, because for some reason that ability normally makes memorization more difficult!....We will arrange these particular rehearsal sessions so that you can record the music to be performed, then practice on your own—on the subway, in the street, etc. Not, however, during the sermon or in the shower!³⁴⁵

People were indeed touched with the love of Christ by way of the Reach Out and Touch ministry, as King intended. The program received much adulation from the workers at Rikers, Spofford, and Coler, as evidence shows in King's file folder titled "F.C. [Family Choir] Accolades."³⁴⁶ After a visit early in the Reach Out and Touch program's existence, the chaplains at Coler Hospital considered the Family Choir their "new friends."³⁴⁷ At Spofford, the Coordinator of Community Services, Delores Moss gushed: "The commitment to true Christian ideals evidenced by the interest shown toward our residents and their spiritual upliftment (sic) is indeed commendable. The choir's visit certainly highlighted the beneficial nature of positive community concern and participation in programs for youth in social crisis."³⁴⁸ The Chaplain at Coler

³⁴⁵ Larry King letter to Family Choir, dated July 12, 1988, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 854, 34.

³⁴⁶ File folder "F.C. Accolades," Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: F.C. Accolades, 852.

³⁴⁷ Elizabeth Shackelford letter, dated December 14, 1978, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: F.C. Accolades, 852.

Memorial Hospital, Oliver Chapin, who oversaw the choir's visits for numerous years, reflected in 1980: "Your coming to us, the warmth and spirit of your varied program, your joining hands with us (something very few folk from outside ever do) have helped to demonstrate the commitment of our Lord to his forgotten brothers and sisters."³⁴⁹ The accolades continued over the years, and in 1984 Chaplain Chapin again reflected on the Family Choir's visit: "You were, as always, the highlight of our Christmas season....It's hard to believe that your first visit to us was in 1978. But it's not hard to believe that you show the reality of Christ's love and care."³⁵⁰

It is difficult to underestimate the impact the Reach Out and Touch ministry had on all involved, both participants and recipients. King's generous and loving heart, and caring spirit, shone brightly through this ministry. The Reach Out and Touch ministry continued successfully for the entire tenure of the Family Choir under King's direction. King described it best when writing the Family Choir exactly one year after the choir began: "Your commitment to sharing our ministry with those confined at Riker's Island is the finest example I can imagine of a musical response to our Christian calling."³⁵¹

³⁴⁸ Letter from Delores Moss to Larry King, dated December 3, 1980, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: F.C. Accolades, 852.

³⁴⁹ Letter from Oliver Chapin to Family Choir, dated December 18, 1980, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: F.C. Accolades, 852.

³⁵⁰ Letter from Chaplain Chapin to Family Choir, dated December 27, 1984, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 563.

³⁵¹ Larry King, Letter to Family Choir, dated March 20, 1978, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: F.C. Correspondence 1977, 1978, 852/6.

Feast of Lights

If the Family Choir epitomized King's musical and pastoral skills, the Family Choir's annual Epiphany blow-out, the "Feast of Lights," epitomized his sense of the theatrical and "alternative." A dramatic service with choreography, lighting effects, actors, and music, King modeled the Trinity performances on the Feast of Lights programs conceived by Professor J. William Jones in 1942 and used since 1948 for annual performances at King's alma mater, University of Redlands in Redlands, California.³⁵² Presumably, King was introduced to the idea during his time studying at Redlands, and likely even attended a production while there, but that remains unconfirmed.

After a full year of preparation by a lay committee, the Feast of Lights began at Trinity Church in January 1979, premiering the weekend after Epiphany. Larry's vision of Epiphany was to celebrate how everyone could participate in rejoicing how the giant of the world (Christ) made a difference in our world.³⁵³ Historical figures who have made a contribution to the world served as "bearers of Christ's light,"³⁵⁴ and were cast as roles to various volunteers within the church.³⁵⁵ Each year the characters and cast included the Biblical figures of Mary, Joseph, Simeon, the Jesus' twelve Apostles and the Three Kings. Then King compiled a list of twenty post-Scriptural figures – nominations to be additional "bearers of Christ's light" – and took this list to the Feast of Lights committee,

³⁵² 1989 Feast of Lights program, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: 854/129.

³⁵³ LaHuta.

³⁵⁴ Letter from Larry King to Feast of Lights participants, dated November 1, 1986, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: 854, 155.

³⁵⁵ LaHuta.

where they narrowed it down to ten or eleven post-Scriptural figures (in 1989 or 1990 this number was reduced to seven figures).³⁵⁶ A perusal of cast lists from various years and a letter from King to the Feast of Lights Committee found in the Trinity Church archives yielded a list of “bearers of Christ’s light” through the years included St. Paul, St. Helena, St. Monica, St. Augustine, St. Bede, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Margaret of Scotland, Julian of Norwich, Victoria, Pandita Ramabai, Archbishop Romero, Augustine of Hippo, Leonard da Vinci, Kateri Tekawitha, John Wesley, Albrecht Durer, Albert Schweitzer, J. S. Bach, Florence Nightingale, Toyohiko Kagawa, Martin Luther King, and Archbishop Luwum. In 1989, one of the characters was Calvin Hampton, King’s long-time friend and New York City colleague who had died four-and-a-half years earlier.³⁵⁷

King prepared the script for the Feast of Lights performances, with many ideas based on those used at his alma mater, but as King recounted, the script was made “very New York and very Trinity” by a creative committee of parishioners.³⁵⁸ The final script was taken in part from the biblical accounts of the prophet Isaiah; evangelists Matthew, Luke and John; and the Christmas Sermon of 1606 by Lancelot Andrews.³⁵⁹

Performances were frequently sold out in advance. In a Trinity era when 250 people attended services on a given Sunday, an incredible 150 people, all volunteers,

³⁵⁶ Letter to FOL committee and nomination list, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: 854, 112-116.

³⁵⁷ Letter from Larry King to Feast of Lights Committee, dated October 5, 1988, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: 854, 124.

³⁵⁸ Brief Outline, 35.

³⁵⁹ 1989 Feast of Lights program..

were necessary to put on the Feast of Lights each year.³⁶⁰ While the Family Choir (of over fifty members) served as the core and backbone of the performances, the Trinity Choir also participated in a smaller way, as did the hand bell choir. The Feast of Lights always saw a large participation by choir members, and King did remark that attendance on Sundays was never quite as good: “Unfortunately, only the Feast of Lights crowd knows how large the Family Choir really is!”³⁶¹ Women in the Trinity parish hand-sewed magnificent costumes appropriate to each particular character, which participants then wore for their role in the Feast.³⁶² Lighting for the shows was hired out to professionals and required many hours of labor: the cost for the lighting production alone in 1987 was \$1,500.³⁶³

Music for The Feast of Lights was about as varied as anything else King did. King’s adored assistant in the music office, Dora Schively, wrote an arrangement of *Fanfare for the Common Man* which was used in Feast of Lights performances; King sought permission from Boosey & Hawkes to use Schively’s arrangement of the Copland work.³⁶⁴ The 1987 production featured a world premiere of a new song by Skinner Chavez-Melo, a good friend and colleague of King’s.

³⁶⁰ LaHuta.

³⁶¹ Letter to Family Choir, dated June 7, 1986, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., 850, 542.

³⁶² LaHuta.

³⁶³ Lighting Bill, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., 850, 150.

³⁶⁴ Permission Letter from Boosey & Hawkes to James Simms, dated January 15, 1987, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: 854, 148.

Dance was included in multiple productions: the Flower Hujer Dance Theatre and Ballet Hispanico participated for several years.³⁶⁵ In 1986, dance segments were introduced with Flower Hujer choreographing the music for the Annunciation and Shepherds' narrative responses. Amusingly, King honestly remarked that "Ms. Hujer insisted on dancing the part of Mary herself, and she was not successful in portraying a teenage girl."³⁶⁶

Each year the Feast of Lights performances raised funds for a specific charity; the committee produced a list of possible causes to support, which was submitted to the Family Choir for a vote.³⁶⁷ The 1987 performances raised over \$8,000 for the Bronx Youth Ministry.³⁶⁸ In July of that year, King arranged for the Feast of Lights committee to go see the Bronx Youth Ministry in person. They were so impressed with work the ministry was doing that they chose them as the beneficiary of their funds in 1988 as well.³⁶⁹ Those 1988 performances raised over \$7,000 for the Bronx Youth Ministry.³⁷⁰ Multiple other charities were supported in other years.

In early 1987, The Rev. Dr. Robert Ray Parks retired as the 15th Rector of Trinity Parish. The Feast of Lights performances in January 1987 were offered in thanksgiving for Park's ministry, as he was a strong supporter of the productions.

³⁶⁵ Letter from Larry King to Feast of Lights participants, dated November 1, 1986.

³⁶⁶ Brief Outline, 49.

³⁶⁷ Letter to Feast of Lights Committee, dated October 5, 1988, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: 854, 124.

³⁶⁸ Letter from Larry King to Friends of the Feast of Lights, dated December 1, 1987, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: 854/141.

³⁶⁹ Letter from Larry King to Friends of Feast of Lights, dated 1 December 1987.

³⁷⁰ Brief Outline, 52.

The Feast continued for twelve successful years. The final performances took place in January 1990 under the direction of James Simms and Lorraine LaHuta, with advance planning having been done with King prior to his departure from Trinity.³⁷¹ Originally King planned to take a sabbatical after the 1990 Feast of Lights, but his departure from Trinity came earlier than expected. So, after much thought, Simms decided that the 1990 Feast of Lights production should go on as planned, knowing that King would be disappointed otherwise.³⁷²

King's passion for producing such a glorious, stunning program was clear, and perhaps one aspect that made it more enjoyable was revealed in his statement that "...[the Feast of Lights] was conceived and executed as a congregational project, and had no clergy participation or interference."³⁷³ John Walker noted how the Feast of Lights made clear to him King's personal philosophies, understanding of Epiphany, and the showing of Christ, of God coming to the ordinary person.³⁷⁴

For six and a half years, beginning in 1977, King directed the professional Choir of Trinity Church and shared responsibility of directing the Family Choir with James Simms. By 1983 King was overwhelmed with the growing Family Choir ministry; he stated that he was "content that [I have] performed the full repertoire with [my] professional choir." Thus, he was eager to delegate the responsibility of the Trinity Choir to Simms, devoting his own energy to directing the Family Choir and to accompanying

³⁷¹ Letter from Jim Simms to Feast of Lights Committee, dated September 21, 1989, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: 854, 118, and Brief Outline, 35.

³⁷² Letter from Jim Simms to Feast of Lights Committee, dated 21 September 1989.

³⁷³ Brief Outline, 35.

³⁷⁴ Walker.

the professionals.³⁷⁵ In August 1983, Simms traveled to England for a three-month study program to prepare himself for taking over the major responsibility of the Choir of Trinity Church. King said himself that he “...was enormously impressed with Mr. Simms’s choir training and conducting abilities.”³⁷⁶ Simms’s England trip involved him in rehearsals and services at Westminster Abbey and Winchester and Canterbury Cathedrals.³⁷⁷ Upon his return to Trinity in November, Simms assumed the role of principal conductor and trainer of the Trinity Choir.³⁷⁸

What a statement of King’s modesty and heart this decision truly was; John Walker remarked on the significance of King sidestepping the glamour of conducting the highly regarded professional choir in order to focus on the nurture of the Family Choir.³⁷⁹ King’s friends and colleagues relate how absolutely thrilled he was to be able to focus more on directing the Family Choir; Cherry Rhodes reminisced how the Family Choir “loved him and he loved them.”³⁸⁰ John Walker also recalled how dear the Family Choir was to Larry’s heart, remembering King saying that “the Family Choir needs me more [than the Trinity Choir].”³⁸¹

As with the Family Choir’s Reach Out and Touch ministry, the effect of the Family Choir is impossible to measure. Indeed, the success of the Family Choir had been

³⁷⁵ Brief Outline, 45.

³⁷⁶ Brief Outline, 45.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ Brief Outline, 46.

³⁷⁹ Walker.

³⁸⁰ Cherry Rhodes, interview by author, May 25, 2013, in person and Bruce Neswick, interview by author, January 2013.

³⁸¹ Walker.

immediate, and was recognized from within and from the outside of church as an extraordinarily unique and strong aspect to Trinity Parish; after just a few months in existence, in the fall of 1977, King remarked to the choir: “We started out last March as an experiment. We grew in numbers and enthusiasm, and will soon be, if we are not already, one of the most vital parts of our parish life. We are already unique and envied in the local church music scene.”³⁸² The Family Choir remained significant to the parish right to the very end of King’s tenure at Trinity. During what would end up being King’s final full year at Trinity, he wrote the Family Choir and referenced them as “...what is already known as Trinity’s most vital organization!”³⁸³ Numerous choir members speak to this day of how important the choir was to their lives, and many spent all thirteen years of its existence under King’s direction participating in the choir. In the words of one shorter-term singer: “My brief, but very meaningful time with the Family Choir of Trinity Church showed me how a group of Christians could really make New York a wonderful place for community and fellowship.”³⁸⁴

³⁸² Larry King, Letter to Family Choir, undated, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: F.C. Correspondence 1977, 1978, 852, 4.

³⁸³ Letter to Family Choir, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: 850/521.

³⁸⁴ Wilson Gault, Letter to Rev. James (Jamie) Callaway Jr. at Trinity Church, dated May 26, 1981, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: F.C. Accolades 852, 21.

Chapter 5: ORGAN WORKS

Three of Larry King's organ compositions are fairly widely known among organists. Two were published within his lifetime, and the third, *Revelations of Saint John the Divine*, has been readily available in manuscript form via "the grapevine" of organists. In 2014, Wayne Leopold Editions published all three organ works in one collection, *Larry King: The Organ Music*, to coincide with the 2014 American Guild of Organists National Convention in Boston which focused on American organ music and composers. Though King did compose other extremely imaginative organ works, very little information is available on them. The three published organ works are discussed here in generality; a Northwestern University document by Andrew McShane entitled *The Organ and Choral Music of Larry Peyton King* provides a measure by measure analysis of each of the three pieces for those interested in a more detailed musical analysis, and Cherry Rhodes provides commentary on all the three works in the Wayne Leopold publication previously mentioned.

Fanfares to the Tongues of Fire

King composed his first published organ work, *Fanfares to the Tongues of Fire*, in 1978 as the result of a commission from The Riverside Church in New York City for a work that would display their new trumpet-en-chamade. It is based on the dramatic birth of the church as depicted in the Acts of the Apostles:

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. Acts 2:1-3

As with many of King's compositions, King utilized a plainsong chant, *Veni Creator*. The title and purpose for the commission indicate that the festive work requires a substantial trumpet-en-chamade for an effective performance. King dedicated the work to Anthony Bufano ("To Tony Bufano, with affection and esteem"), curator of the Riverside Church organ and it was premiered by Frederick Swann, organist and music director at Riverside, on Pentecost Sunday, 1978. The original publication was published in 1980 in *Majestic Trumpet for Organ*, but was more recently republished in the 2014 collection of King's three organ works by Wayne Leopold Editions.

Resurrection

Larry King composed his second published organ composition, *Resurrection*, while in Spain on sabbatical from Trinity Wall Street. He was granted four months of leave from August through November 1981, which he spent in England and Europe. While he studied in France with Jean Guillou during this trip, his primary interest for the sabbatical was the study of Spanish music of the Golden Age (late 1500's through 1700), and as such he spent two months in Seville, Spain. In a letter to Cherry Rhodes in September 1981 he recounts some of his travel and his upcoming study in Spain:

Your ears should have been burning the night this famous conductor and I polished off a bottle of wine on The Terrace of his new pad at Westminster Abbey! Simon [Preston] and I were students together at the [Royal Academy of Music] before he went to Kings and more years ago than either of us will admit to having been alive!

Now I'm in Paris, and just returned from #25 Rue Gay Lussac and a coaching session [with Jean Guillou] in improvisation – I am hopeless, but not as hopeless as I must have seemed. Have another session Friday, then take him out to dinner. It's been 18 years since I've been here, and only the prices have changed. Can't believe \$1.80 for a soup bowl of coffee and a roll and croissant; vino seems the only bargain (at least after England) so this will be the "lush" chapter of my study

leave. On to Roma on Monday for a week, then some serious sinning in Southern Italy before setting up in Seville for Oct and Nov – composing and coaching in keyboard music of Spain’s Golden Age. Back to N.Y.C. on Dec 1, and play again at Trinity Christmas Eve.

Simon & Jean join me in sending much love!³⁸⁵

Whether or not King arrived in Spain with the intent of composing *Resurrection* is unknown, but his friend and colleague Cherry Rhodes, and his assistant at Trinity at the time, Bruce Neswick, both confirm that his study in Spain had significant influence upon *Resurrection*.³⁸⁶ Rhodes recalls hearing King play a program of Spanish organ music and soon thereafter hearing Catherine Crozier perform *Resurrection* upon which Rhodes had a “eureka moment” hearing the connection between the two. She also pointed out that it was “wild for Larry to be playing Spanish music,” an acknowledgement of King’s great versatility and interest in many genres of music.³⁸⁷ The composition was published in *The A.G.O. 90th Anniversary Anthology of American Organ Music*, a collection edited by Philip Brunelle with pieces selected by the New Music Committee of the American Guild of Organists and designed to display a wide variety of styles. Crozier gave the world premiere at the 1982 National A. G. O. Convention in Washington, D.C.³⁸⁸

In the preface to the work, King provided notes which strongly reflect his sense of the hope Christ brings to the world and King’s passion for sharing that with others through his music.

³⁸⁵ Larry King, letter to Cherry Rhodes, dated September 1981, Cherry Rhodes’ personal files.

³⁸⁶ Rhodes.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ It is likely that this convention is where the previously mentioned instance of Rhodes hearing King’s Spanish recital program and the premiere of his *Resurrection*, but the author and Rhodes were unable to confirm this.

Resurrection portrays in freely structured fragments the four aspects of the resurrection. Originally titled for liturgical use, its genesis took place during the composer's reflective months abroad, which were punctuated with reports of and reactions to America's changing priorities. This reactivated his longing for the resurrection of the social consciousness that had stopped a war and given priority to caring.

LAMENT combines the liturgical mourning of the plainsong "Vinea mea electa" (O my vineyard, I planted and tended thee...and thou hast prepared a cross for thy Savior) with an expression of contemporary grief. THE RISING grows quietly from this grief, using twelve-tone rows and techniques to express its cosmic nature. THE ECSTASY develops an alleluia strain with embellishments not unlike those used in the music of the Age of Aquarius. REFLECTION combines the liturgical rejoicing of the plainsong introit for Easter Day, "Haec dies" (This is the day which the Lord has made), with the alleluia fragments.

It is hoped that the music conveys a fresh vision of the historic resurrection of Jesus Christ with a prayer for the resurrection of the consciousness that reflects and implements his ministry.

The alleluia fragments which King references in the 'The Ecstasy' and 'Reflection' sections alternate between sixteenth or thirty-second note figures of adjacent notes. As shown in Figure 5.1, the first eight measures of 'The Ecstasy,' King includes a slash at the beginning of each figure with a footnote stating that "Groups of 16th and 32nd notes marked with a slash should be "expressively rushed" but not to the point of blurring." These figures are the most characteristically "Spanish" in *Resurrection*, showing a link to the style of music King would have been exposed to and studied while in Seville, in particular the practice of rhythmic alteration as seen in music from the Spanish Golden Age. King's instructions regarding the slash achieve the same result as a type of rhythmic alteration outlined by Renaissance Spanish theorist, composer and organist Tomás de Santa María (c.1510-1570) in his discussion of performance practice. Santa María outlines the possible realization of equally notated sub-divisions being performed as a Lombardic gesture wherein initial notes of a beat are rushed, allowing the final note

within a beat to linger longer than the printed duration.³⁸⁹ In particular, Figure 5.1 from *Resurrection*, system 2, bar 2, beat 4 of the left hand illustrates a perfect example of this common rhythmic gesture found in early Spanish organ music performance practice. Also characteristic of this repertoire is the use of variations over a ground bass which can be seen in *Resurrection*, Figure 5.1, by way of the bass line of the left hand within the first four measures, and then in the pedal line beginning in measure 4. This pedal line gives the impression of a ground bass due to the recurring melodic pattern, which continues throughout ‘The Ecstasy.’

Two other items of note stand out regarding this work. The third section, Ecstasy, contains remarkable similarities to the 1967 hit “A Whiter Shade of Pale” by the English rock band Procul Harum. The harmonic progression and descending bass line is identical, and the upper melodic motives in Ecstasy, already noted as having a Spanish influence, are comparable to the instrumental melody in “A Whiter Shade of Pale.” This uncanny similarity was originally brought to the author’s attention by organ professor Dr. Christopher Young at Indiana University who had no connection to King other than an interest in rock music. However, it was subsequently also noted by Gregory Eaton, an assistant of King’s at Trinity in the mid-1980’s:

Listen to a recording of Procul Harum’s ‘A Whiter Shade of Pale,’ and then listen to ‘The Ecstasy.’ Though I have no knowledge of direct influence from Larry himself, I think the harmonic and motivic similarities are striking. I have no doubt that this was a piece imbedded in his mind from the 60s. I’ve never discovered the ‘populist Alleluia’ he mentions in his own notes, but am sure that Procul Harum is there legitimately, whether it was conscious on his part, or not.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁹ Johnson, Calvert, ed. *Historical Organ Techniques and Repertoire: An Historical Survey of Organ Performance Practices and Repertoire. Volume 1: Spain, 1550-1830.* (Greensboro, N.C.: Wayne Leupold Editions, 1994), 58-9.

³⁹⁰ Gregory Eaton, interview by author, January 13, 2016.

Eaton's last point leads to the other item of note in this composition. King's inclusion of plainsong throughout the work reflects his grounding in the traditional while still skillfully incorporating other influences, whether intentional (twelve-tone rows in 'The Rising') or simply a result of King's absorption of contemporary music via listening to non-classical music such as rock and pop.

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system shows a piano introduction with a 'Full Sw.' (box closed; open gradually) and a 'mf' dynamic. The second system features a 'Sw.' (f) and a 'Pos.' (f) section. The third system features a 'Pos.' section. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings.

Figure 5.1 The first eight measures of *Ecstasy* from Larry King's *Resurrection*.

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Revelations of Saint John the Divine

Larry King's third and final published organ composition, *Revelations of Saint John the Divine*, is perhaps the most innovative, dramatic, and moving of his compositions. It is a unique work for tape and organ and he composed and performed the synthesized sounds himself for the accompanying tape. The commission came out of his friendship with organist Cherry Rhodes. Upon hearing the premiere of *Resurrection* at the 1982 Washington, D. C. National A.G.O. Convention, Rhodes knew that she wanted to ask King to write an organ work. She was living in California by this time, having left New York City (where she and King initially met) in 1975 for an appointment as organ professor at the University of Southern California. When King came to Southern California in April 1984 for the premiere of *The Glory of Easter* – King wrote the score for the Crystal Cathedral production on commission from Fred Swann – King and Rhodes had a reunion. Rhodes attended the premiere of *The Glory of Easter*, and upon seeing and hearing the incredible opening scene of the marketplace in Jerusalem, Rhodes was struck by King's exotic, atmospheric score and her interest in an organ commission was confirmed: "You would have thought you were [in Jerusalem at the marketplace]." ³⁹¹

Thus, Rhodes requested King compose a work to include on her upcoming concert for the Association of Anglican Musicians (A.A.M.) conference in June 1984. King was reluctant to write a piece, especially for her concert at A.A.M.; when he asked her what else she would be playing on the A.A.M. concert, she informed him she was playing Bach's *Musical Offering* and the west coast premiere of Calvin Hampton's *Five Dances*. King's typical humble response was, "Oh Cherry, I can't be on the same

³⁹¹ Rhodes.

program as Calvin Hampton!” Rhodes also encouraged King by letting him know that she would certainly compensate him for the commission, to which King responded: “I do best when I create things out of love.”³⁹² King finally relented and agreed to write the composition. Rhodes did not prescribe any specific text on which to base the composition, but left it completely open for King to choose. “Larry knew I was into drama and poetry, and so that’s what he gave me!”³⁹³

Rhodes gave the world premiere of *Revelations of Saint John the Divine* on June 19, 1984 at All Saints Episcopal Church, Pasadena. While a part of the A.A.M. conference, the concert itself was sponsored by the Los Angeles and Pasadena A.G.O. Chapters. King sat with Calvin Hampton at the performance and the work was an enormous success.

Revelations of Saint John the Divine is in three connected sections, based on these verses from the Biblical book of Revelation:

I am the Alpha and the Omega, who is and who was and who is to come.
Revelation 1:8

I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale; the sky vanished like a scroll that is rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the generals and the rich and the strong, and every one, slave and free, hid in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks: “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand before it?”
Revelation 6:12-17

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ Rhodes.

The dwelling of God is with his people. And he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away. Revelation 21:3b-4

King composed and recorded synthesized sounds for the tape, including wind and bird sounds. The tower bells of Trinity Church Wall Street are heard at the very end of the piece, recorded by King in the dead of night from the graveyard of the church to avoid street and subway noise. Rhodes recalls asking King about some of the sounds: “Are those birds at the end or are they electronic sounds?”³⁹⁴ King replied that they were a mixture of real birds and synthesizers, and the real bird sounds were also recorded from the graveyard.

Following the premiere at A.A.M., a Los Angeles Times critic stated he had some reservations about another composition Rhodes performed on the program, but regarding King’s piece, the critic stated:

In that context, Larry King’s gloriously gaudy, richly dramatic *Revelations of Saint John the Divine* was more than welcome. The tape part, with its hissing winds, voices and bird calls, created a vividly spacious effect, filling the upper reaches of the high ceilings in the sanctuary with swirling sounds.³⁹⁵

Rhodes recalls that “when I showed the review to Larry there was that smile and twinkle in his eye and he said, “I love that part, ‘gloriously gaudy!’”³⁹⁶ She also relates that *Revelations* is still enthusiastically received by all audiences at any performance, regardless of country or location.

³⁹⁴ Rhodes interview.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ Rhodes, eulogy to Larry King.

There are logistical challenges of successfully performing a work for tape and organ. Rhodes and the author agree on two important points in ensuring success. First, the speakers must be of high quality, and secondly, you must have a qualified engineer with a good ear to adjust the recorded part during the performance. Time and patience are required to set up the piece at any location. King also shared with Rhodes the many problems and challenges recording and getting the tuning correct for the recording on his 8-track machine: “Cher [His nickname for Rhodes] – never again!”³⁹⁷

For the 2014 publication of King’s three organ works by Wayne Leopold Editions, Rhodes worked extensively with a recording engineer to produce an updated version of the performance tape, which is included with the publication in the form of a compact disc. Also included is an updated rehearsal track for practice purposes.

Aquarius II

One final unpublished work, *Aquarius II*, is mentioned here, in brief. The author has been unable to locate any written or recorded copy of this work. The only information about the composition is found in program notes for a King recital on June 21, 1983, documentation which gives insight into the composer’s choice of eclectic styles within a single work. Based on these descriptions the work sounds in part like a combination of the yet to be composed *Resurrection* and *Revelations of St. John the Divine*.

Composed in 1974 for organ and quadraphonic tape, [Aquarius 2] was premiered at Trinity Church Wall Street, with the tape part panning from the four corners of the building. The tape part has been re-mixed for stereo playback for tonight’s concert. Composed at the height of the Vietnam War protests, it portrays the influence of the ideals of the Age of Aquarius on that particular time in history. Disguised themes from a popular Broadway show are mixed with twelve-tone

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

rows and sonorities in the opening section, which leads to a portrayal of peace and serenity as the tower bells of Trinity Church are heard on the tape; soon, sounds of alarm, protests and representations of man's inhumanity overtake this serenity until a popular song of the day suddenly interrupts: "Sunrise! Surprise, civilized man, your animal is free." A 12 tone passacaglia theme is then embellished by four other songs commenting on issues of the day, entering fugally, and increasing to cacophony. The awakening to the ideals of "harmony and understanding" is then represented by cascading clusters leading to 12 tone but major chordal progressions, which soon fade into a return to serenity.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁸ Recital Program Notes, June 21, 1983, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder: Recital Programs.

Chapter 6: “WE’RE GOING TO WIN THIS BATTLE”

Sadly, King’s days at Trinity were numbered, not for a lack of energy or enthusiasm, or a dearth of creative musical ideas, but due to a recurrence of melanoma. Unbeknownst to many colleagues and even friends, King had been valiantly fighting cancer for seventeen years.³⁹⁹ The first written record of any illness was in a document of the Trinity music program’s history, where King wrote of himself in 1975: “Larry King entered St. Vincent’s Hospital at the conclusion of the [1975] Ascension Day Service for the removal of a malignant melanoma and the lymph nodes on his right arm.”⁴⁰⁰ Thereafter few details are known; like most of his personal life, King was extremely private and shared little personal information with anyone. Before his own tragic death in 2016, King’s friend, colleague, and Calvin Hampton protégé Harry Huff reflected on the surprising news of King’s illness:

I knew very little about the profile of Larry’s illness. I think it was a while before I even heard that he had a terminal illness. In those days, virtually every one of my male friends (and I suspect his, as well) died of the AIDS virus, and I remember thinking how odd it was that a gay man in those days could actually die from something else. It somehow seemed especially tragic to me.⁴⁰¹

We do know King had multiple surgeries, radiation, and chemotherapy, and the melanoma recurred two times following his surgery in 1975.⁴⁰² At one point, King’s good friend Cherry Rhodes learned he was going to have a new, experimental treatment.

³⁹⁹ Multiple sources including: Skinner Chavez-Melo article, NYC AGO Newsletter, May 1990, Rhodes’ personal files; John Walker interview; and Brief Outline, 28.

⁴⁰⁰ Brief Outline, 28.

⁴⁰¹ Harry Huff, interview by author, 1 January 2016, via e-mail.

⁴⁰² Multiple sources, including: Walker interview. One source indicates King had five “remissions,” but all other sources indicate three occurrences of the melanoma. William Wells, “Orange County Chapter Founding Member Passes,” May 1990, *Clarion*.

Rhodes called her brother-in-law, a famous oncologist at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, who spoke with King's doctors and became convinced that King should not have that trial treatment. Instead, the oncologist prescribed another treatment which King eventually did receive via his own doctors. This treatment apparently extended King's life and he indicated to Rhodes how extraordinarily grateful he was for the wisdom and advice he received from her brother-in-law.⁴⁰³

As recounted by those that did know of King's illness, King simply accepted the cancer in a matter of fact way. His close friend from Trinity Church, Lorraine LaHuta, recalled their last times together in Manhattan. She never recalls any "Why, me?" or "Poor me!" comments from King, but simply an attitude of "It's my time, this is what's happened."⁴⁰⁴ King always maintained a positive outlook, remarking to the choir at one point: "I have no medical proof at this point, but my heart, spirit and energy level tell me that my condition is on the mend. See what prayer can do!"⁴⁰⁵ Gregory Eaton remembers that King simply saw the melanoma as a nuisance. As Huff reflected that many people were dying of AIDS at the time and would literally be gone within days of diagnosis, Eaton also echoed that King likely saw his illness in context to those around him with AIDS and knew that the melanoma was much less significant.⁴⁰⁶ Well-known organist and A.G.O. colleague John Walker became a good friend and treasured colleague during the last ten years of King's life, especially in King's final years of fighting melanoma.

⁴⁰³ Rhodes interview.

⁴⁰⁴ LaHuta.

⁴⁰⁵ Letter to the Family Choir, dated June 7, 1986, Trinity Church Wall Street Archives, New York, N.Y., Folder 850, 542.

⁴⁰⁶ Eaton.

Walker recollects how they “bonded even more keenly” when Walker was diagnosed with cancer himself in 1989.⁴⁰⁷

King’s third and final recurrence of cancer was in the middle of 1989. To the amazement of his doctors, King had successfully battled the melanoma twice; this third recurrence was in a different form, requiring immediate treatment.⁴⁰⁸ He resigned from Trinity almost immediately; Trinity’s newsletter later notified their members of the quick decisions with the following statement:

No sooner was Larry apprised of the situation than he took action, putting his New York home on the market (which sold in 3 days!), and making arrangements to move to southern California, where doctors have pioneered advances in chemotherapy.⁴⁰⁹

Because King had James Simms working closely alongside him at Trinity, he could make the decision to depart on short notice without leaving Trinity empty-handed musically. A formal announcement was made to the congregation regarding King’s resignation on Sunday, September 10, 1989, his last official day at Trinity.⁴¹⁰ The Trinity Parish newsletter stated:

After 21 years and three months of service at Trinity Church, Larry King said goodbye on September 10 in characteristic fashion: without fanfare, and with the congregation’s interests paramount.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁷ Walker.

⁴⁰⁸ “A Tribute to Larry King,” Trinity Church Wall Street Newsletter, Rhodes’ personal files.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

Saying farewell to the Family Choir would undoubtedly have been one of the most, if not the most, difficult aspect for King when leaving Trinity, yet his words to them spoke volumes of his mindset and his outlook on life in general:

I want to see faces of determination, faces of confidence, and faces of faith. Because I can assure you that never before have I been so determined, never before have I been so confident, and never before has my faith been so strong. We're going to win this battle, my dears, you can count on it.⁴¹²

The Family Choir unsurprisingly came through on their final Sunday under King's direction:

Charged by their retiring director to continue singing to the glory of God, Family Choir members responded as one voice, setting a tone for a worship experience that fully expressed parishioners' love for Larry.⁴¹³

While King's official leave from Trinity began immediately after the service on September 10, he took disability leave beginning on October 4, 1989.⁴¹⁴ Multiple people the author interviewed have indicated that King knew as he left Trinity that he was dying, and he desired to return home to his beloved California. As included above, however, the Trinity Parish newsletter announcing King's departure simply indicates that he was moving to California for medical treatment, making no mention of King's West Coast roots or his mother, who was still living there.⁴¹⁵ In December 1989, King moved back to Fullerton to the same Malvern Avenue home in which he spent most of his upbringing.

⁴¹² "A Tribute to Larry King."

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ King presumably remained on disability until his death, as the next mention of him in Vestry minutes is notification of his passing.

⁴¹⁵ "A Tribute to Larry King."

His mother Dorothy, 85 years old, still lived there alone, King's father, Leslie, having passed away in 1978.⁴¹⁶ King would remain at this family home for his last days. It is unclear what treatment King actually received upon his move to Fullerton. King's mother cared for him during his last months, and eventually he had home hospice care in his final days. Cherry Rhodes drove from her home in Pasadena to Fullerton every Wednesday to visit King; she spent time with him, helped to care for him, and provided comfort to Dorothy. It was during these visits that Rhodes noted Dorothy's graciousness and gentle spirit – the same traits that she no doubt passed along to King. Rhodes recalled how grateful Dorothy was for her visits and also how deeply Larry cared for his mother; Rhodes' visited Larry in the hospital towards the end of his life, and he asked her a favor: "Could you drop by the house and give Mother a hug?"⁴¹⁷ At some point during these final days, King requested that Rhodes not come, not desiring anyone to see him in his ill state. Rhodes pleaded with him otherwise, however, and King relented. "He was still smoking his cigarellas [sic] in bed -- typical Larry!" recalls Rhodes.⁴¹⁸

Either King went downhill very quickly in 1990, or he was eternally optimistic, the latter of which would be entirely possible knowing King's personality. King had several visits with friends in early 1990, including one from New York City colleague and friend Skinner Chávez-Melo, then Dean of the New York City Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. He visited King in Los Angeles in February 1990:

⁴¹⁶ After retirement in 1971, Leslie spent time restoring his father's 150-year old grandfather clock which had lain in pieces in a closet since the 1933 earthquake. He died on April 9, 1978, at age 78, at St. Jude Hospital in Fullerton. Dorothy would pass away of pneumonia five years after Larry, on July 13, 1995, while awaiting a hip replacement following a fall. Both Leslie and Dorothy are buried at Rose Hills Memorial Park in Whittier, California.

⁴¹⁷ Rhodes, eulogy for Larry King.

⁴¹⁸ Rhodes, interview.

[King] picked me up at Disneyland and we drove to have dinner at one of his favorite places in the area, the restaurant in Knotts Berry Farm. “You’ll have the best home-style fried chicken dinner ever,” he said with his characteristically mischievous [sic] smile. In the car he told me how much he was looking forward to coming to New York in May and seeing his friends again....“Three weeks of pure, unadulterated fun,” he said.⁴¹⁹

That time of “unadulterated fun” in New York City was not to be. King won the eternal battle on Holy Thursday, dying in hospice care at his family’s home in Fullerton on April 12, 1990. Memorial services were held simultaneously, two days after Easter, on Tuesday, April 17: one at Trinity’s St. Paul’s Chapel (work was being done in Trinity Church at the time) and another at St. Andrew’s Episcopal in Fullerton. Despite the King family’s long association and involvement with First Christian Church in Fullerton, King’s own lengthy affiliation with the Episcopal Church through his work and his affinity for the liturgical service were likely factors in his service and burial being held at St. Andrew’s as opposed to First Christian.⁴²⁰ King was buried in the chapel columbarium at St. Andrew’s Episcopal. King’s long-time supporter and volunteer assistant at Trinity, Lorraine LaHuta flew out to California with James Simms as representatives of Trinity at the Fullerton service. “A Mighty Fortress,” “For All the Saints” and Thomas Tallis’ “Third Tune” comprised the hymns, Maureen Turk sang the “Pie Jesu” from Gabriel Fauré’s *Requiem*, and a listing for Haydn’s “Creation” followed the Dismissal. Fittingly for a musician, Psalm 150 was spoken, as was the traditional Psalm 23.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁹ “Dean’s Letter, New York City A.G.O. Chapter Newsletter, May 1990, Rhodes’ personal files.

⁴²⁰ Steve Townsend e-mail, January 11, 2017 and Buck interview.

⁴²¹ Memorial Service Bulletin for Larry King, Rhodes’ personal files.

At Dorothy's request, Rhodes gave a eulogy, as did Simms. In her eulogy Rhodes recalled King's positive outlook and spirit, even in his final days. She recounted King's words to her in his final weeks, when doctors informed him that the cancer had taken a turn for the worse: "I have led a rich, full life and have done so many things I wanted to do. I have really been a fortunate person."⁴²² LaHuta, upon meeting Dorothy prior to the memorial service, reflected: "One could see where [King] got his gentle, loving spirit from."⁴²³ After the memorial service and the reception at the family home in Fullerton, Rhodes, LaHuta, and Simms celebrated in "true King fashion."⁴²⁴ Rhodes recalls "...[we did] the craziest thing in honor of Larry. We rode the monorail at Disneyland and we were shouting it up for Larry because he loved to party!"⁴²⁵

⁴²² Cherry Rhodes, Eulogy for Larry King, Rhodes' personal files.

⁴²³ LaHuta.

⁴²⁴ Rhodes interview.

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

Chapter 7: EPILOGUE

King's death was truly the end of a remarkable era at Trinity and marked the end of a life dedicated to serving others through the gift of music. He was not simply an organist, composer, and innovative church musician, but a trailblazer truly ahead of his time. As a musician on "the cutting edge," King blended various genres of music with liturgy drawing congregations and audiences from all walks of life, inside and outside of the church. As a champion of new music, he sought out, supported and commissioned American composers in addition to composing himself. Above all, King was the model of a consummate pastor, ministering to all, and he had the extraordinary ability to recognize gifts in those around him. Perhaps most unique to King's career was that he never appeared to "dedicate" his life to music or serving others, rather he simply lived out what came naturally to him: sharing both the gentle, generous spirit passed down from his mother, and musical and creative talent with the world. He was able to engage the congregation, community and even art in an organic way.

Notices of King's death and the tributes to him at the time of his death all speak to his impact upon others, both friends, colleagues and parishioners. As such, after a vibrant and innovative career, one would surmise that King's legacy would be fairly well documented. However, there were surprisingly few public tributes at the time of his death, and in the almost three decades since his death, King has seemingly been completely overlooked in the church music world. In stark contrast is Calvin Hampton, whose legacy is much more well-documented. Perhaps King's humility and unassuming nature contributed to this: King's work was never about him – his music and ministry stood alone for itself.

On Good Friday, 13 April 1990, Daniel Nelson Colburn II, Executive Director to the American Guild of Organists at the time, wrote a letter to the membership:

It is a privilege to bring these greetings on behalf of the National Council and the entire membership of the American Guild of Organists. We are all saddened by the loss of Larry King. It is a loss that will be deeply felt by the entire profession that he loved and served so creatively and tirelessly throughout his career. As an organist, composer, conductor and administrator, Larry was a consummate professional. In his music, and through those who had the privilege of making music with him, he will live on.

As a leader in the Guild, Larry made memorable contributions, both to the chapters he served and to the national organization. His concept of professionalization notably revised the New York City Chapter in the 1970's, and his ideas are being carried out still. As a member of the National Council, and as a positive force – whether in office or not – he helped raise the consciousness of the Guild and led us to an increased confidence in ourselves and level of caring for others. In all this, he will be greatly missed.

But it is as a truly pastoral person that he will be most fondly remembered—As a valued colleague, an inspiring leader, a caring, patient teacher and a trusted friend. As Larry's extended family gather both in California and in New York City today, we mourn his loss and express our deepest sympathy to his mother, Dorothy, but we can also rejoice, as he is surely rejoicing, in the certain hope of resurrection to abundant life.⁴²⁶

In a letter to Cherry Rhodes on the same day, Colburn noted that King was his original connection to the Guild:

Many thanks for calling me today with the news of Larry's death. I am really sorry, but actually grateful that he did not have to linger uncomfortably for too long. The enclosed is an attempt at something from the AGO to be read at the service there on Tuesday, if you think it's appropriate. I am called on to do these things, or similar, from time to time; and it has never been so difficult. Usually they have not been people I've really known. Larry was the one who got me involved in the Guild on the local level back in the 1970's, and as such one of my longest associations in the field.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁶ Daniel Nelson Colburn, Letter to AGO Membership, April 13, 1990, Cherry Rhodes personal files.

⁴²⁷ Daniel Nelson Colburn, Letter to Cherry Rhodes, April 13, 1990, Cherry Rhodes personal files.

King's versatility as a church musician remains unmatched to this day, particularly within the Episcopal church community; perhaps only the late Harry Huff's innovative work in Boston at Old South Church comes close in recent day, and as a protégé of Hampton, and a bit less directly of King's, it is not difficult to understand why. King had three remarkable musical abilities: 1) to prepare and perform music ranging the gamut, from "high" Anglo-Catholic liturgies, to Protestant settings, to rock-inspired service music, 2) to skillfully combine these elements into a single cohesive worship service, and 3) to maintain high-standards across all the variety of music. Above all else, King was a consummate pastor, ministering to all in the church, whether involved in the music ministry or not. He was an unassuming gentleman with a generous spirit, topped only by his red hair and olive green suit!

Upon King's death in 1990, David Hurd, who came to Trinity in 1971 as King's Assistant Organist, and an excellent musician with a stellar musical career in his own right, reflected that "When it comes to musical and liturgical integrity, I can think of no one who comes close to Larry."⁴²⁸ Others also speak to King's support of colleagues; John Walker recalls King's "...very wise and kind counsel," and his consistent professional affirmation, stating that "none of the competitive strain that afflicts organists...particularly in big city settings," ever came upon King.⁴²⁹ Walker reflected on how the cancer affected King's career, saying that King "...had to shepherd his energy

⁴²⁸ "A Tribute to Larry King."

⁴²⁹ Walker.

carefully,” and asserts that King’s career likely would have been “a lot more illustrious” had he not been fighting the melanoma for so long.⁴³⁰

King’s life and career can be summed up by the text of his own stunning anthem, *Let Us Love in Deed and Truth*. Dedicated to the Family Choir and composed at some point during King’s time at Trinity, King based the text on 1 John 3:17-23:

If anyone has the world’s good, and sees his neighbor in need,
Yet closes his heart against him,
How does God’s love abide in him?
Let us not love in word or speech, but in deed and in truth.
By this we shall know that we are of the truth:
We have confidence before our God, and we receive from him whatever we ask,
Because we keep his commandments, and do what pleases him.
And this is his commandment, that we should believe in his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another.

By all accounts, King was a giving, loving, sensitive, intuitive, devoted and loyal friend; his unassuming and generous spirit led an incredible music ministry at Trinity Wall Street.

On May 15, 1990, Larry posthumously received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree, *honoris causa*, from General Theological Seminary for his distinguished contribution to church music. Thankfully, King knew about this great honor before his death; he had made plans to attend and receive the degree in person.

⁴³⁰ Walker.

Appendix A

Music and the Church

An address given in Trinity Church in the City of New York

By Mr. Larry King, Organist and Music Director

On Sunday; June 18, 1972, Pentecost III

On the occasion of the first Sunday performance by

Sidhartha of Michael Kamen's "Trinity Mass"

Source: Trinity Church Wall Street Archives

Many of you are here today because it is your custom to worship God in Trinity Church each Sunday; your openness and support of contemporary musical expressions have paved the way for the new music you are hearing this morning. Others are here specifically to hear Michael Kamen's Mass, and you may wonder what we are trying to accomplish.

If my remarks seem to be somewhat on the defensive, it is because we will be criticized by a few of you here, and by many outside: basically because we have utilized a musical idiom which has yet to receive universal acceptance, and which is thought by some to make house plants die and to cause nice children to turn into dope addicts. I hope to ease discomfort for some, and give rationale to those of you who will have the opportunity to champion this music achievement.

Music has played an important role in worship from the beginning of time. The Christian Church especially nurtured this art form, preserved it, and until the end of the 18th century was the major patron of composers. In those days, words alone separated church music from secular music. On hearing the music itself, we cannot easily distinguish a church anthem by Gibbons from one of his secular madrigals, or a Bach sacred cantata from his coffee cantata. In the nineteenth century, the Church lost its nerve, and the evolution of music was turned over to the concert hall. Church musicians would dare present newer music only after its idiom had been accepted by the public at large, by which time it was generally considered "old hat" in the artistic world. It is no wonder, then, that few major composers have created anything for church services in the last 150 years.

We are seeing signs of hope in the 1970s in significant commissions and in dialogue with mainstream composers, but I fear that some of these are supported in the unlikely hope that music and other externals alone will preserve the Church.

We hear from every side that the church as we know it is dying, and I think we all know that it will unless we enable it to change. We look in panic at the diminishing proportion of young people involved in the life of the Church, and we attempt to make our services more attractive to them. This was not our primary motive in commissioning the rock mass we are hearing this morning, and I doubt very much that this music is going to set any conversion record.

It is impossible to speak on behalf of all the young people outside the church's grasp, but I would like to try to speak for a goodly number of them who are finding in their own culture and its music that community which we would like to have them find in the Church.

They think Jesus and His teachings are beyond compare, but they cannot accept our theology of His being the Divine Son of the Omnipotent Ruler of the Universe when our so called commitment to Him and His teachings does not change our lives and does not radicalize us into actively confronting the evils of our society.

They revere and respond to churchmen like the Catonsville Nine and the sometime Dean of Johannesburg (sic), South Africa (who stood in this pulpit last week), but they look upon them as part of their community and not of ours. It's so much easier for the Church, which is you and me, to change our music, our ceremony, our translations, our organizational systems and our programs than to recharge our commitment to that Man whose ways can salvage this world of ours. Until this happens, on a noticeable scale, we will do well not to expect more than passing interest in our external experimentations from these socially conscious youth.

Why, then, a rock mass, commissioned by and performed in a parish church which was established when Bach was only twelve years old, and which, since that time, has had no small amount of influence on church music in this country?

The new translations of our liturgical songs require us to either adapt old music to accommodate changed metres (sic), or to create new music for them. The former, in addition to being musically dishonest, denies the new words the powers of that music which best expresses today's musical achievements. Our integrity, then, requires us to strive for this very thing, and in every worthy contemporary musical idiom.

Rock music is regarded by many musicians and others over thirty as nothing more than the successor to the musically impoverished pop songs of their youth; these people have not gone beyond the dance-rock tunes of juke boxes and the top forty songs of AM radio. Anyone who analyzes the music of the Beatles from their first songs through those on their last recordings will hear sheer novelty mature into incredible craftsmanship and ingenuity. Come to this church on Tuesday at 12:45 and hear the New York Rock Ensemble in concert; listen to WNEW-FM, or study the recordings on a list I have available today, and you will hear what I consider to be a serious art form. The adherents (sic) of this serious rock music are so musically sophisticated that they generally prefer baroque, renaissance and *avante garde* music to most commercial popular music.

At a symposium following the premiere of the Trinity Mass on Wednesday, a young man said he felt the service was degraded by being associated with the music of the secular world, and that we should stick with traditional church music. Church music that has passed the test of history—as I said earlier—was the music of the secular world of its day. Bach’s cantatas were accompanied by a “far-out” band of strings, oboes, trumpets and drums. (Bach would surely dig Sidhartha!) There were those who thought Bach should have stuck to the music of the renaissance, which was similarly attacked in its day; plainsong was under frequent fire in the middle ages, and one plainsong scale was even thought to incite immoral behavior! Music written for the church in the last 150 years that did not parallel the best of its secular counterpart has been found wanting and has disappeared, or soon will disappear, into oblivion – leaving future generations with little or no evidence of any artistic expression of the faith of this period.

The culture that has produced rock music—creating it, performing it, and rallying around it, is a caring loving community that champions the values and concerns of our Lord. I think He must feel terribly at home in this community—as I do. There are few things I value more than my friendship with the fantastic four young men who are performing this Mass today, and with others of their community.

Rock music powerfully projects feelings of joy, of outrage, of penitence, of love: the qualities of our liturgy. It is an art form wholly expressive of the world we have shaped; it is an outgrowth of a caring, loving community, and its lyrics have communicated moral ideology with a force the Church has rarely mustered. How, then, can it not have its place in the House and worship of God?

It is especially important that rock music be recognized in this historic and influential parish. We must continue to be on the “cutting-edge” of music in worship: experimenting with and commissioning (as few other places can) various forms of the music of our day---pushing into the future, and all the while retaining the great treasures of our musical heritage.

For some of you, I hope this setting of the Mass will broaden your scope of music appreciation; for others, I hope it will strengthen the impact of the words of the liturgy on your hearts and minds; this it did for many on Wednesday. It will fulfill a need by parishes throughout the country which have been attempting folk and rock masses that were composed by priests or nuns who have a knowledge of three guitar chords and a good memory for the harmonies and melodies of “Home on the range” and “Five foot two, eyes of blue.” What a put on this has been for young people, and what a blow to the integrity of the Church!

We were able to enlist the services of a master-craftsman from the rock world to compose today’s Mass. It has already been honored outside the Church by the very discerning Allison Steele of WNEW-FM, whose taste in selecting rock music for her nightly broadcast is, in my opinion, above reproach. On her Wednesday night program

she told of her joy at being in Trinity Church at noon to hear “Michael Kamen’s incredibly beautiful new mass, performed to perfection by Sidhartha.”

Our concepts of public worship today give us only one criterion for the acceptance or rejection of liturgical music—and that is quality. Unfortunately, the very best music can bore, and it can offend. The old masters bore many, and the new sounds offend others. However, those who are bored or offended by good music can remedy that situation by learning what it’s all about—by “getting into it.” Bad music, on the other hand, is indefensible---whether it be baroque, rock, renaissance or electronic. There is no recourse for those who know quality other than to flee, and public worship in a place such as this is not meant to exclude. Much as we like to think that what we like is good, and what we dislike is bad, it takes a trained musician to know the difference. This puts an enormous weight on me as Music Director of this Church, and calls for a great amount of trust from you.

“Heavy” is a word frequently used by young people today – meaning important, deep, full of meaning. They frequently use it in reference to music – the kind to which you want to give your full attention. The Church, its worship and my faith are very heavy things to me. While I’m one of the Church’s biggest critics I have given it my life: a heavy commitment. In going beyond the safe music which history has already proved to be good, I have assumed an especially heavy responsibility. I firmly believe that our faith and our public worship call for heavy music – be it Bach, or rock. I feel certain that we have that here today.

Appendix B

SERMON

Mr. Larry King
Organist and Choir Director
The Third Sunday After Epiphany
January 27, 1974

Source: Trinity Church Wall Street Archives

I come before you this morning as your musical leader, and as your brother in Christ. I know that some of you, perhaps many of you, are having problems with some of the music here at Trinity. It's terribly important that we begin to communicate – openly, honestly and lovingly. Following our services in February, I urge you to join me upstairs to discuss four areas of concern regarding our music: hymns, the music of the Mass, the choir's part in the service, and the music of today. With God's help, we will really listen to each other. We will probably all revise our attitudes – at least a little – but we can then go forth together to tap the great musical potential of this family.

This morning I want to share with you some of my deepest feelings about music and its role in our worship. I ask you to give them a great deal of thought, and be prepared to challenge me as we explore them more thoroughly next Sunday.

Some people have said that the musical ministry of this church is on the “cutting edge” – expanding slowly but steadfastly to identify our liturgical life with what is best in our own time, while preserving the very best of our tradition.

For the past seventy years the Church at large has kept at least twenty-five years behind the most creative music of its own time. There is no doubt, then, that the cutting edge is going to be painful to many at times. My great faith in you as a corporate body and as individuals gives me confidence that this is THE place where Christians can move forward and create together a musical experience that is more spiritually enriching than anything we have yet known.

You have all been so much in my heart and mind as I vacationed and thought about what I wanted to say to you today. I would wager that there isn't a more balanced or more exciting mixture of God's people coming together in His name anywhere. We have the beginning of the perfect community. I think we are all realizing that the Church for too long has been hung-up on and consuming its energies on religiosity – the kind of thing that makes “how the candles are snuffed” more important than loving people, than deepening our understanding of and commitment to the Christian faith, and communicating to our sisters and brothers out there in this city who are thirsting for spiritual food, and seem able to find it only in eastern, mystical, and humanistic religions.

There are hopeful signs in our life together here that the day is not far off when we can really begin to attract others by our witness. We all know that music, when properly used,

can be a dynamic force in witnessing, evangelizing, and in awakening our consciousness – that awareness of who we really are, where things are at out there in the real world, and the interrelationship of the two.

Our guide to the best use of music in worship, I think, is integrity – which Webster defines as “adherence to a code of moral, artistic or other values.” Ultimate artistic integrity would not permit music in worship if its purpose is to be “frosting on the cake,” to make worship a sweet, soothing, entertaining event, or to use its emotional powers to manipulate the hearers.

Let’s now think about some specific kinds of musical actions, and how we can use them meaningfully within our worship, and with fullest integrity.

A hymn is probably the ideal musical act of the people. The renowned theologian, Eric Routley, gets to the heart of the matter in these words: “A hymn is an opportunity for a congregation to declare its experience and to rejoice in Christian doctrine corporately...it uses words in order to help a congregation speak its mind corporately, and music to enhance that corporateness...the result is something that goes right into the heart of the congregation, and comes out not as the author’s words being sung by a group of Christians, but as a group of Christians stating its belief.”

If we allow the simplicity of singing a hymn to let our minds wander, if we allow a hymn to be used as a pep exercise, an accompaniment to a parade or as an “ecclesiastical seventh inning stretch,” it is lost as a meaningful act of worship. A hymn is a lesser creed, a prayer, or a cry of adoration, and our integrity calls us to use it with the respect due such actions.

The music to which we sing a hymn will affect our psyche in such a way as to strengthen or weaken the impact of the words. Music of any style which is truly good will have a positive influence on our psyche and strengthen those words – for good music is artistic truth and honesty, which speaks to the very depths of our being.

Other musical acts of the people are those portions of the Mass you are frequently or always asked to sing. In these songs, we are not blessed with a poetic metrical system that fits a simple, repetitive music. The composer must work harder, and the people even harder. When faced, as we have been, with new translations of these songs, we are forced to find a suitable music. We live in an age when there is no longer a “common” music; gone are the days when we all knew and loved “Home on the Range.” Today, every generation of every ethnic and class group has what it considers the only “singable music.”

The ideal solution is contemporary music – the creative music of our own time – which has a major ingredient the blending of elements of all musical traditions – Eastern, European, and African. Such settings permit artistic integrity which requires a composition to speak in a new and creative way, as opposed to rearranging the musical vocabulary of the past. In conquering and singing in the musical language of our day, we

should find ourselves more capable of relating our faith to today's world. Creating and learning such new music is a challenge: it is not easy for you or me: but it holds exciting prospects for the development of a new song that could unite us all, and help us grow in our faith.

On April 28 we will begin use of a new Mass which Trinity has commissioned. The composer, William Albright, is a young American who has been hailed and praised throughout the world for his creativity and craftsmanship. His setting will be singable, but it will not sound like any of our favorite pieces of music. I have great faith that we will be ready for it!

Before we leave these areas which involve your vocal participation, I would like to comment on congregational singing in general.

Whatever we sing in a service is either going to be a strong witness to our faith, or a bewildering stumbling block to those who may be in a church for the first time. I attended three services on my vacation where the congregational singing was so poor that even I, who understand the dispositions of traditional Episcopalians, found it difficult to believe that there was much genuine faith to be found in those places – and none of the music was even new or out of the ordinary!

We have here a building which is great for listening to music and very destructive to actually producing it. Acoustical experts have recommended that we suspend sound reflecting panels over our choir so that they can hear each other; you face the same problem. All of us must overcome it with determination and individual confidence, but unfortunately singing in here will never be as fun as it will be when we sing in the choir room after today's service.

Let us finally look at the music in our service which is called "Fine Art," and which is sung by the choir. We are surrounded on Sunday morning by fine art: in the architecture of this building; in glass and silver; in sculpture and fine cloth. The choir is our one element of living art: a group of people who come together and become one as they give themselves wholly to the design of the creator of the music, producing living truth and beauty. It's symbolic of the aim of the Christian community, isn't it? They bring to life the reflections of the spiritual consciousness of the masters of the past and of the present. The result may inspire you; it might soothe you; it could jar you, or perhaps simply carry you into your own inner consciousness where you can reflect and meditate. These choral offerings are time honored acts of worship which major Christian houses of prayer everywhere sacrifice to maintain.

We start having problems with this art when we expect to always understand or appreciate it. I never go to hear a new piece of music with the expectation of immediately liking it. The secret is opening ourselves to unknown music completely, experiencing what it does to us, where it leads our thought processes, and creating its meaning for our individual selves. This requires the full participation of our hearts, souls, and minds and this distinguishes art from entertainment.

I really think that the key to experiencing a dynamic musical ministry is in the depths of a strong faith. A strong Christian faith gives us new life; it makes us want to grow in every conceivable directions; it gives us the courage and the will to move into the world of today and to identify with the best of that world; it puts the fear of change, the new and unknown behind us; it makes us eager to explore a new idea, whether it be from a theologian, a philosopher, or a composer, all in the expectation that our understanding of life and our faith will be deepened in the process; it makes us want to sing our praises, prayers and resolutions. The power of the Holy Spirit is with us in all we undertake – whether it be to love the unlovable, or to learn and heartily sing a brand new song. Music is a fundamental substance of my own personal communication with God; I pray that I can help each and every one of you to share in its spiritual powers.

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